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WORKS BY H. RIDER HAGGARD

POLITICAL HISTORY

Cetewayo and His White Neighbours.

WORKS ON AGRICULTURE, GARDENING, AND COUNTRY LIFE

Rural England.
A Farmer's Year.
A Gardener's Year.

BOOK OF TRAVEL

A Winter Pilgrimage.

NOVELS

Dawn.
The Witch's Head.
Jess.
Colonel Quaritch, V.C.
Beatrice.
Joan Haste.
Doctor Therne.
Stella Fregelius.

ROMANCES

King Solomon's Mines.
She.
Allan Quatermain.
Maiwa's Revenge.
Mr. Meeson's Will.
Allan's Wife.
Cleopatra.
Eric Brighteyes.
Nada the Lily.
Montezuma's Daughter.
The People of the Mist.
Heart of the World.
Swallow.
Black Heart and White Heart.
Lysbeth.
Pearl Maiden.
The Brethren.

(*In collaboration with Andrew Lang*)
The World's Desire.

A GARDENER'S YEAR

"I list not seeke the common colours of antiquitie; when notwithstanding the world can brag of no more ancient monument than Paradise and the Garden of Eden; and the fruits of the earth may contend for seignoritie, seeing their mother was the first creature that conceived, and they themselves the first fruit she brought foorth. Talke of perfect happinesse or pleasure, and what place was so fit for that, as the garden place, where Adam was set to be the Herbàrist? Whither did the poets hunt for their syncere delights, but into the gardens of Alcinous, of Adonis and the orchards of Hesperides? Where did they dreame that heaven should be, but in the pleasant garden of Elysium? Whither do all men walke for their honest recreation, but thither where the earth hath most beneficially painted her face with flourishing colours? And what season of the yeere more longed for than the Spring, whose gentle breath inticeth foorth the kindly sweetes, and makes them yeeld their fragrant smells?"

GERARDE'S HERBALL,
"*From my house in Holborn, Dec.* 1*st*, 1597."

"We wreathe our dead with flowers: they are the best which we can offer them, to whom the gold and frankincense and myrrh of this world have no longer any meaning. Flowers, we believe, strew the path they tread; flowers undreamed of droop from the trees that wave above them in the fields which they have won. To our imagining, the heaven we hope for is a land of flowers. At least, we are told that the lost Eden of our race was a garden. Gethsemane also was a garden, and, if he will but read them, to each human soul as he wanders through life's Gethsemane such flowers as blow in it have a message. Should any doubt, let him visit a children's Hospital and see how the sufferers there turn their pale faces to the flowers as the flowers turn their faces to the sun. I remember writing, I know not where, that even in a flower there dwells some shadow of the glory of its Maker. This I believe, and so I say, 'Good luck to those who conjure such shadows to the earth; good luck to the gardener and good luck to his gardening;' for he does something to brighten this grey, ungracious world."

H. R. H.—*One and All Gardening*, 1899.

FRONT LAWN AND POND GARDEN

A GARDENER'S YEAR

BY

H. RIDER HAGGARD

With Plan and twenty-five Illustrations

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
1905

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I DEDICATE

THESE MODEST BUT, AS I TRUST,
NOT UNINSTRUCTIVE PAGES

TO

MY FRIEND AND FELLOW-GARDENER

MRS. ROBERT MANN

DITCHINGHAM,
16*th August* 1904

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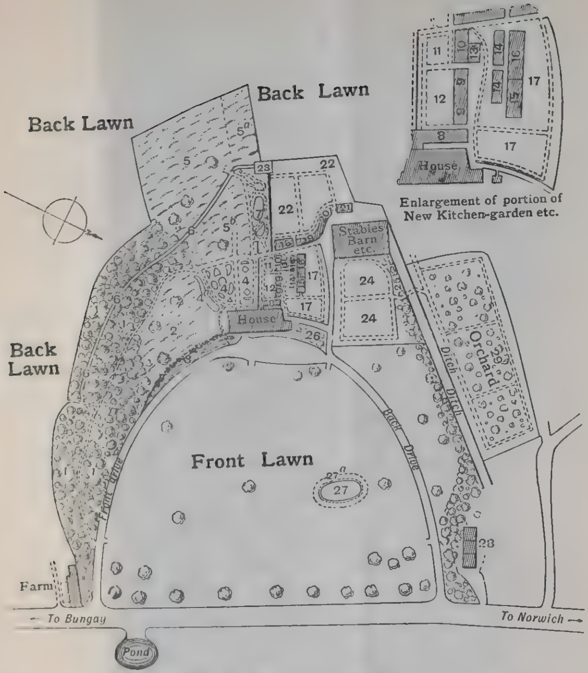
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KEY TO MAP OF GARDEN

1 Shrubbery
2 Old Lawn
3 Bank with Yew Fence on top
4 Flower-garden with ornamental beds
4a Open Flower-border
5 Tennis Lawn
5a New addition
5b Grass
6 Sunk Walk
7 Elm-tree Garden with old Yew Fence
8 Old Potting-shed, &c., now converted into Mushroom-house, &c.
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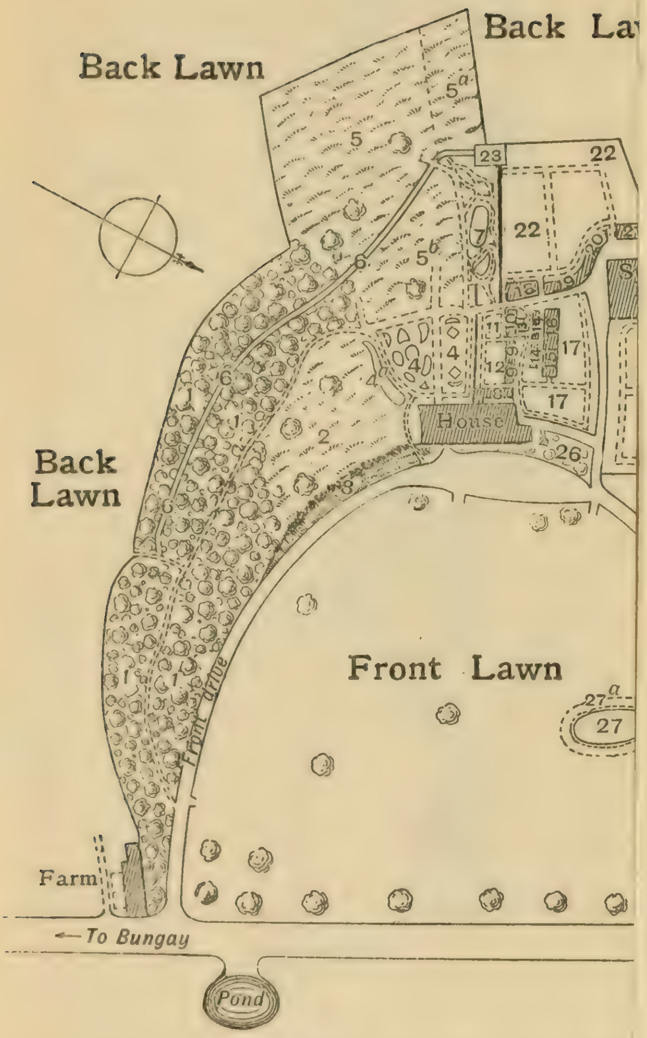
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← To Bungay
Pond
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17 New Kitchen Garden
18 Intermediate-house

A GARDENER'S YEAR

THE GARDEN PAST AND PRESENT

MANY a book have I sat down to commence, all of them with a humble heart, but none that I can remember in quite such earnest fear and trembling as this gardener's diary for the year 1903. For more seasons than I care to count I have been a gardener in sundry lands, following that most ancient craft with a single mind, and not, I hope, without learning some of its mysteries. And yet how much remains to learn, more than ever can be learned by me. My case is not singular, however, and herein lies consolation; at least never yet have I met the man or woman who knew *everything* about gardening, least of all among those who follow it by profession.

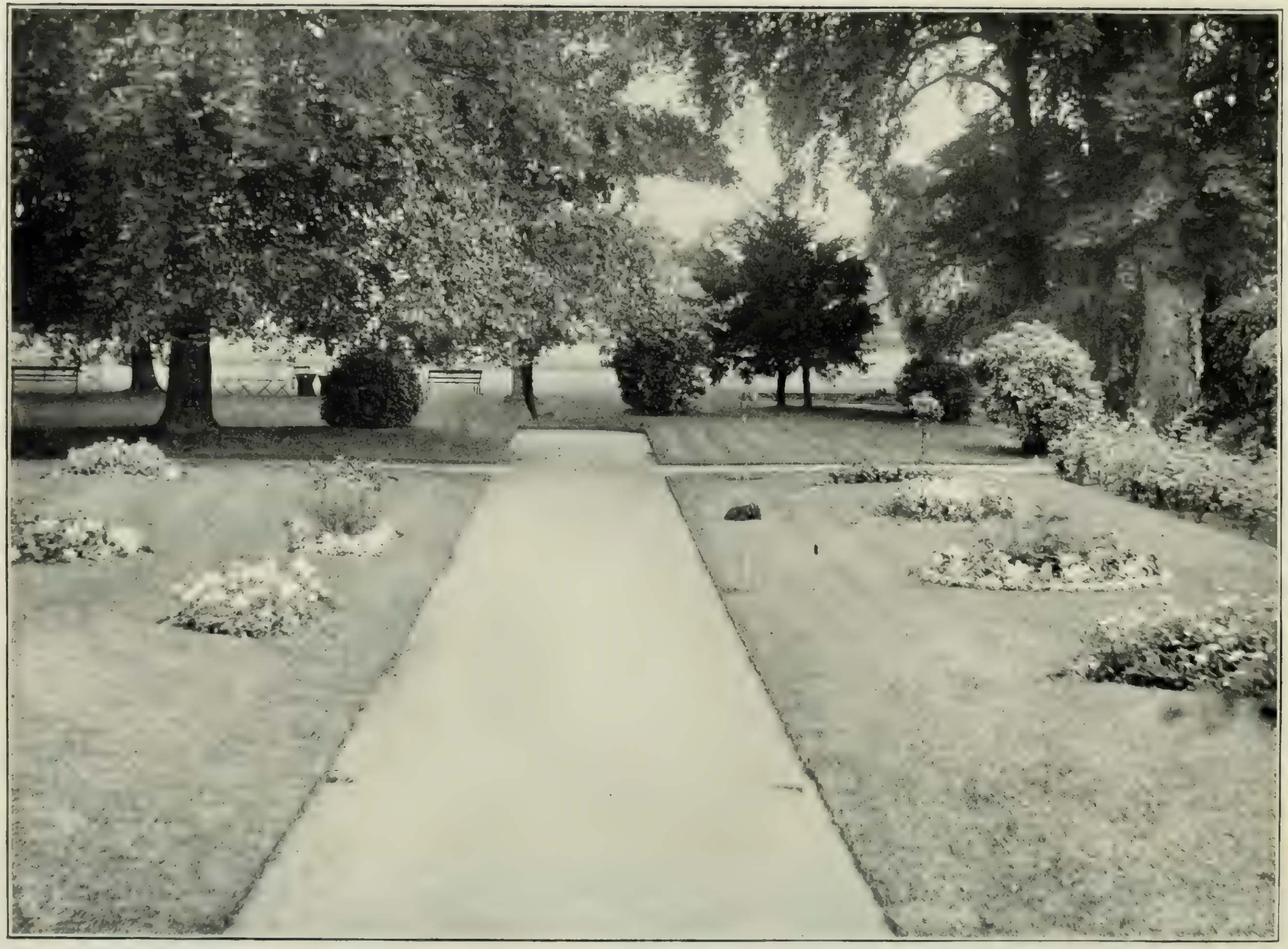
These for the most part are good flower-men, or good vegetable-men, or they understand Grapes, or can grow Violets—but fail with Roses and other things. Or perchance, but this is rare, though many there be who swear it, Orchids are their *forte.* (Here I may say at once, speaking as a modest amateur of these last-named lovely plants, rather would I hire a man who had never seen one of them. Of course there are many exceptions, still every grower should pray to be delivered from the new "head" who "understands Orchids." Better far take a novice who is willing to learn, and train him.)

To sum up, the individual, employer or servant, who is really master of *all* branches of English gardening has not been met by me. If he exists, he is as rare as the truly perfect garden that I have seen but once or twice. Pray, then, let it be understood that *I* am not a perfect gardener, but one, in this respect as in others, full of failings, nor is this which I cultivate, a perfect garden. Would that it were.

Still, such as it is, I cannot begin better than by describing it. Some of it is ancient, over a hundred years old, perhaps much more, and it stands high. The soil is a stiff loam upon blue clay. Once when I dug out the bed of the Peach house, I had to remove a quantity of this primeval blue clay, and was surprised at its tenacity and closeness. Pickaxes were needed to get it out, and a tiny square would break up into enough to fill a cart. Yet even in this hard, unpromising material there must be virtue. I know it thus.

With the excavated clay I made a bank about four feet high by six feet or so through at the base. On this bank (after a frost had crumbled it) I planted a Yew fence, perhaps a dozen years ago. To-day it is not by any means all that such a fence should be; but, putting aside the dryness which browns the covering turf and must afflict the roots in summer, for this there are two reasons. Until last year I never clipped it, therefore it is loose in habit; and secondly, for a great part of its length it stands under the shadow of that most beautiful but most poisonous of trees, the Beech. Where they are clear of this upas shade, that is near by the house to which they run, the Yews have, however, done very well. This, I think, shows that there is nutriment to be found even in blue clay, which, I suppose, has not felt the sweet influences of sun and rain for hundreds, or, perhaps, thousands of years.

When first I knew this garden—the summer sun and winter's wild, wet face have looked on it some four-and-twenty times since then—it was small, and, with a lad to help him, managed by one man, now retired to a



VIEW OF FLOWER GARDEN

cottage at the gate. Poor lad! he went for a soldier, and, returning at the expiration of his service, took to herring fishing, and was drowned off Lowestoft. To the south-east lay the old tennis lawn, as it does to-day, somewhat hollow in shape ("dishing" is the local term), perhaps because brick earth may have been dug from it when the house was built in generations gone. This is backed by a strip of plantation that screens it from the House farm, and on it stand a copper and two fine green Beeches, one of the latter invariably the earliest tree to burst its buds in all this place. Here, till I drained it, the water stood in pools.

To the south was, and still is, the Flower garden, through which run one wide, central gravel walk and two others. In the turf spaces thus inclosed are round, lozenge, and crescent-shaped beds. In those old days there were edgings of evergreens on either side, but they are gone now, that on the left looking south having become an open border, and that to the right a Rose bed, between which and the ancient, leaning, red-brick wall runs one of the paths. Not far from the foot of this bed, by the round, arched doorway that leads to the other parts of the garden, over which white Clematis trails like snow in summer, stand seven ancient Elms. Very beautiful they are, bare or leafed, but sometimes they shed their great limbs without warning, as is the fashion of this dangerous tree.

Beyond this again was, and still is, the Back lawn, stretching to the top of the steep slope above the river Waveney, but now, on the further side of a sunk path of which no one knows the origin (it may have been part of a moat, or perhaps it was but a humble ditch), a double tennis court has been stolen from this field and inclosed with railings. Here, when they have nothing else to do, the red-polled cattle love to stand chewing the cud, either because they take an interest in croquet or tennis, or, more probably, in expectation of the sweet cut grass which is thrown to them from the mowing machine.

Passing the arched door, the well, and an ancient Mulberry tree that grows out as far as it can from the shadow of the Elms, to the right, backed by another wall, in those old days stood a forty-feet Vinery. It ended in the tool house and what afterwards became the potting shed, while to the left, beyond an iron gate, and inclosed with a fine Hawthorn fence now done away with, lay the Kitchen garden proper. As I have given up growing Grapes in favour of more flowers, this Vinery, a low-fronted, old-fashioned structure, glazed with little panes of glass, has now been converted into two greenhouses. Of these greenhouses, which have a south-easterly aspect, that to the south, nearest the boiler, which is set in a pit behind the back wall, has the most pipes, and is given up to the growth of plants that need a certain amount of warmth. These I will describe more particularly in due course. Its northern end, divided from the rest by a glass partition and a door, where there are only sufficient pipes to keep out the frost in very cold weather, I devote to the hardier flowers such as Primulas, Cyclamen and Auriculas.

I remember hesitating long before I could make up my mind to cut out the Black Hamboro' grapes, especially as in past years I had remade the border with a proper rubble drainage bed and retaining wall and reset the Vines, their predecessors being worn out. But this garden produces a good deal of fruit of one sort or another, and Grapes on a small scale are nowadays far cheaper to buy when needed than to grow, while, on the other hand, no one can have too many flowers—that is if, like myself, he chances to be a flower-lover. So the Grapes were sacrificed, somewhat to the grief of my old gardener, he who is now retired, for, like most of his class and generation, he loved a few Vines, and understood their management very fairly. Indeed, he grumbled at the decree, and assured me that flowers would not thrive in this steep-roofed structure where those on the back stage must stand some way from the glass. In this, however, he was mistaken, as they do well.

To the south of the old Vinery, and separated from it only by a narrow path, is a glasshouse of more modern make, measuring eighteen feet in length and ten or eleven in breadth. I put it up some twenty years ago when I did away with the brick flues of the Vinery, and, as it had ample pipe heat, used it to grow stove plants. My success with these tender subjects was, I remember, but moderate, for in those days we did not understand the scientific use of fumigation, or of syringing with X L insecticide, so that they became much infested with foul blight of various degree. Also, the leading idea of most old-fashioned gardeners with reference to a hothouse was that it should be hot, and so mine kept it as hot as mediæval fancy painted a certain region where flowers are not supposed to thrive. Therefore I gave them up and grew Cucumbers instead.

Now the place is once more transformed, for it has become a Cold orchid house, fitted with the excellent lath shades that work on iron runners raised about eight inches above the level of the roof. But little heat is admitted here, except in severe weather, and in it Masdevallias, Cymbidiums, and Odontoglossums flourish exceedingly. Indeed, I was much pleased when Mr. Tracy, the well-known orchid grower and dealer, after whom is named that lovely plant Cymbidium Tracyanum, informed me a year or two back that my little collection of Masdevallias was the best that he had ever seen for its size, and asked to have a photograph of them in bloom to show his customers what could be done with these quaint and radiant-hued flowers.

Leaving this Cold orchid house on the right, we pass a little length of Holly fence, in which I am growing up a tree to give shade to the glass and look cheerful in the winter months, and the bed of Christmas Roses at its foot, into the Old kitchen garden that lies to the south-west. This may measure about a quarter of an acre, and is bounded to the south-east by a Yew fence, that must, I imagine, be a hundred years old; to the south-west by the Back lawn, from which it is separated by an iron railing; to the north-west by an old brick wall, whereon grow Pear trees that I planted; and to the north and north-east by a higher wall, which I built.

Against this wall, occupying all its length, stand three glasshouses, also put up in my time. The first of these, counting from the north-west, is a lean-to structure, which was rather difficult to build, as it follows the curve of the wall. It measures about forty feet in length by fourteen in breadth. This has a little boiler of its own built into the brickwork at the end, with pipes attached, named the Loughborough, a contrivance I find to answer admirably when heat is required; also to be inexpensive in the matter of fuel.

All the other houses, by the way, are warmed from a single boiler of moderate power, in which I burn coke. Formerly I used anthracite, that gives more heat, but abandoned it, chiefly on account of its expense.

The lean-to house in question is devoted to Figs and Tomatoes, both of which do admirably there, as from its position it is a veritable sun-trap. Of Figs there are four trees of different kinds trained against the back wall, which they now fully cover, providing us with a quantity of their delicious fruit throughout the summer. The Tomatoes grow in front, some of them running up wires trained along the roof of the house and others tied to stakes. As soon as they are cleared away the Chrysanthemums which have been standing abroad in the garden are moved in to take their place, those of the smallest habit being set forward.

These are arranged in a sloping bank in such fashion as to leave a narrow walk between them and the front of the house. For some months past they have afforded a noble show of many coloured bloom, but now, at the beginning of the year, they are being removed, draggled and dying. Indeed, as I write, some of the last of them, large and delicate yellow in hue, stand before me on the table.

Next to the Fig house is the Peach house, an unwarmed structure of about the same length, but somewhat narrower, with a very steep pitch, and low, far too low I think, in front. In this Peach house is a deep tank, which receives the rain water from its own roof and that of the Fig house, where a pump makes it available also. A perfect blessing is this tank in places where so much syringing has to be done, for even in dry times it is rarely empty, since, having so considerable a catchment area, quite a moderate rain suffices to fill it afresh with that soft water which is so necessary to trees and plants.

In this Peach house are five trees, one of them a Nectarine, two trained on a wire framework from the front, and three, of which more presently, upon the back wall. Any room that there is to spare is filled up with Tomatoes planted in the ground—that is, in summer; also plants, such as Imantophyllums, are placed to grow here beneath the shadow of the Peaches, until in late autumn they are moved back to their blooming quarters in the Warm greenhouse. In the very beginning of spring, however, we grow salad stuff, to come in for early use, such as Mustard and Cress and Radishes, either in boxes or on the surface of the bed in which the trees are planted.

Beyond this Peach house, and separated from it by a narrow gravel path, occupying all the remainder of the wall and partially shaded until about midday by the tall Elms of which I have spoken, stands a larger house, measuring about thirty feet in length by eighteen in breadth. It is a three-quarter span, its back part resting on the wall some six feet below the coping.

This house was built to my own design, with the aid of local talent, for the purpose of growing Cattleyas, Lælias, and other Orchids that require an intermediate temperature, whence it is known as the Intermediate house. It has a very large tank in the middle, with small hot pipes running through it, to supply water and keep a nice moisture in the air. This tank, when the rain collected from the roof gives out, can be replenished by water from a pond in the southernmost corner of the Old kitchen garden, whence it is pumped and runs through pipes by gravitation, delivering itself here and in other tanks in the Cold and Cool orchid houses.

Over this large cement tank is the central bed, supported by oak props, and formed of sheets of galvanised iron covered with broken coke. Here live my Vandas and other tall Orchids. On another bed over the hot water pipes, carefully made of cement, and measuring three feet in width, which, except for the door space, runs all round the house, stand the Cattleyas, whereof many more specimens are suspended from the roof or, with other Orchids, are placed upon the hanging shelves.

As I trust that my readers will become acquainted with them in the course of this year's journey, these I will not now stay to describe. Of the house itself, however, speaking with the pardonable pride of its architect, I may say that it has proved a great success, although by one expert at least I was told that I had built it too high for the liking of Orchids. This, if I may judge from the results, has not proved to be the case.

So much for the glass in the Old garden. For the rest it is a productive piece of ground, except to the south-east, where the Elms shadow it. Cut them as I may, the roots of these great trees, passing beneath the Yew fence and the gravel path, continually force their greedy tentacles into the manured soil and suck out its goodness. In this section of it, indeed, I have ceased to try to grow vegetables, but use it, first for a line of Dahlias, which do well here, and beyond them for Sweet-peas. Then come a row of Gooseberry bushes, a patch of Raspberry canes, and two lines of Gooseberries which I am growing upon my own principle, that is, trained to wires in such a fashion as to make thin hedges easily protected from birds. Gooseberries grown thus will bear enormously if properly pruned, nor is the fruit difficult to gather.

Along the edges of the gravel walks by which this garden is divided, some fifteen or sixteen years ago, knowing no better in those days, I planted a number of espalier Apple trees in succession to other worn-out espaliers, which I rooted up. Indeed, there is now no fruit tree in the garden which stood there when first it came into my care. Nothing, however, would induce me to plant another espalier, as they require an enormous amount of attention, and, owing chiefly, I believe, to the too severe pruning to which they are subjected, are very apt to canker or otherwise go wrong. Pyramid trees on the Paradise stock are, in my opinion, much better in every way.

Such, described very briefly, is the Old garden, which, if I may judge from the stories that I hear of it and its amazing productiveness, must indeed have been a wonderful piece of ground forty or fifty years ago. Perhaps it was, or perhaps no such vegetables grow nowadays as grew in our youth! Also of the latter the ordinary household did not consume so many as it does to-day.

In those times, when the Old garden was in its glory, beyond the Hawthorn fence which is now replaced by the new wall, lying between the stables and the back premises of the dwelling-house, lay a stretch of grass, perhaps half an acre in all. This was divided into two portions by the stable drive, and about it were dotted a few trees, among them an Oak and a Walnut of half a century's growth or so. Also there were two clumps of very tall Elms, one standing at the north end of the stables, and one near to the kitchen. These, after considering them for some years, although I hated the task sorely, I made up my mind to cut down, since I saw that otherwise a gale would surely blow that must bring them on to the buildings to the destruction of these, and mayhap of folk within them. Well was it that I did so, for it proved that of those clumps of Elms there was scarce one that was not rotten in trunk or root. I am convinced that if I had left them until the hurricane of 1897 most, if not all, of them, would have snapped or been torn up, with results that I do not like to contemplate.

When they were gone the place looked bare, and I planted the grass with standard Apple trees, which came from a firm recommended to me in France. Afterwards I went further and determined to add this land to the garden. On either side of the stable drive I made four-feet wide flower borders, protected by iron railings, that to the left going towards the stable being planted with bush and standard Roses, and that to the right with various perennials. They have proved successful, and now that the Roses have grown into good-sized bushes look very pretty in the summer.

Of the French Apple trees ultimately I grubbed up all but six, of which four, now well-grown standards, remain in that strip of the New garden where the Rose border is, and two in the other strip called the Stable garden, that is bounded to the north-east and north-west by a tall fence of split oak pales, along one part of which is planted a Filbert hedge, to break the force of the cold spring winds. The ground, which may measure something over half an acre in all, and is of sound quality though rather stiff, was thoroughly trenched, and now, after twelve or thirteen years of working, is very productive, although somewhat shaded by trees to the north-west. For the rest it was divided into beds of suitable size separated by rather broad gravel paths, along most of the length of which are planted espalier and bush Apples and Pears.

In the New garden proper stands one span-roofed glasshouse about forty feet in length by twelve broad, and divided into a small and a larger portion. Originally this was built to accommodate Cucumbers and Melons, but as I soon found out that the space given up to them produced far more of these fruits than we needed, I relegated them to certain pits heated by hot water that stand close by in front of the boiler and Mushroom houses, and gave up their old home to flowers. Now it is filled with Orchids; Cypripediums and Cœlogynes for the most part in the cooler and larger division, and miscellaneous varieties that require more heat in the smaller. Close to this greenhouse are the Cucumber pits of which I have spoken, and above them, in the shade of the Old garden wall, some cold frames set on a brick pinning. These, with the exception of various other movable frames in which Potatoes, Violets, &c., are forced or protected, make up the total of my glass.

Beyond the Stable garden, which is bounded on the south-west by that building itself, a gate in the paled fencing leads to the rubbish yard, where leaf soil is stored and refuse burnt. Then comes a patch of ground planted with Filberts, which are, however, sadly overshadowed by some Oaks and a Beech tree that I do not like to cut down. Beyond this again, after crossing two bridged ditches, we come to the Orchard, an acre of ground, narrow in proportion to its length, sheltered to the south-west by some farm buildings, to the south-east and east by a belt of shrubbery and forest trees planted about sixty years ago, to the north-east by some cottages, and to the north-west and west by a twelve-feet high fence of Myrobella plum, backed beyond the farm roadway with another tall fence of White-thorn in which grow a few young Oaks.

This Orchard was originally a strip of rough grass in which, in the winter of 1890, I planted sixty standard Apples and Plums, though but a few of the latter. It was a bold thing to do, this planting of standard trees on the Free or Crab stock, although the soil, being deep if heavy, is well suited to them.

Indeed, the experiment is not one that I should ever have the courage to repeat, seeing that many years must go by, at any rate under our conditions, before such trees come into profitable bearing. Now, however, they are beginning to give a fair return, although from some of them I have not yet plucked an apple, and, on the whole, I am glad I made the venture. Until two years ago these trees stood upon the grass, which was only cleared away in a circle round the stem of each of them, but in January, 1901, I planted between them about a hundred pyramid Pears of the best eating sorts known and grafted on the Quince stock. That winter also, and in the late autumn of 1902, I trenched all the soil, and set in it within the last two months about a hundred and eighty more pyramid Apples—to be accurate, some ninety Ribston pippins, over seventy Cox's Orange pippins, and a dozen Bramley Seedlings. Of these, the Ribstons and the Cox's Orange are well grown two-year-old trees that I procured from Belgium, and the Bramley Seedlings large bushes of six years' growth. All of them are grafted on the Paradise stock.

It may be thought that my acre of orchard is somewhat full of trees and bushes; still, for the next two or three years I expect to be able to grow a good quantity of vegetables between them. After this it is probable that, with the exception of the large Asparagus bed at the bottom, the land will have to be given up entirely to orcharding, and if I want more space for vegetables it must be taken in from the Back lawn to the south-west of the Old garden.

Such is a general sketch of the garden of which I propose to treat in this diary. It will be seen that although not very large it is of fair size, the kitchen-stuff ground measuring perhaps full three-quarters of an acre in all, the lawns and Flower garden, including some of the Shrubbery, perhaps an acre and a half, and the Orchard another acre, which brings up the total to over three acres, with six glasshouses. Also, which I forgot to mention, there is in the Front lawn a pond, inclosed by an iron railing and planted with white Water-lilies and a few of the Nymphæa hybrids with other water plants, and, running round it above the turf path, a sloping bed set with various plants and bulbs.

Thus mine is a garden in which a good many different things are grown, from Orchids down to Cabbages, with equal interest, if not always with equal success. Indeed, let me warn the reader once again that here he must not seek perfection, or horticulture carried on upon a large and expensive scale. Moreover, as he has said, this gardener is fully conscious of his own shortcomings, and of how very very much he has still to learn in this most gentle, fragrant, and wholesome of the arts.

He may plead, however, that he loves it earnestly; that to him his garden, that place of consolations, is the great rest and refreshment of a busy life; that he knows every plant in the greenhouses and every tree in the Orchard. His hope is, therefore, that others of similar taste, and situated somewhat as he is, may find interest and now and again instruction in this year's record of his struggles, his failures, and his successes, should the fates have any of the last in store for him. At the least, if they have a mind that way, it can do them no harm month by month to watch the great march of Nature, to see the sleeping roots awake in the mystery of growth, the flowers bud, bloom, and fade, the trees put on their livery of various greens, the fruits swell and ripen, as spring, summer, and autumn wend their unending course from winter's resurrection back to the grave of winter. It may even do them good, since, above all else in this world of ours, perhaps, certainly these things are pure and wholesome.

Now, before I begin my diary, it remains for me only to speak of the labour employed upon the place. This, since I desire, and indeed am obliged, to carry on my garden as economically as I can, is by no means excessive. First there is the head gardener, Mason by name, who served ten years or so in the position of "second" before he succeeded to that of "first." I will add that he is devoted to his work, absolutely, in my opinion, the most necessary qualification in a gardener. Without it, whatever a man's training and opportunities, never, never, will he succeed, since, as much as any other living things, to thrive plants need sympathy, and even love.

When he came here, Mason had never seen an Orchid any more than I had when I began to grow them; but now, in a humble way, we can hold our own; of course, not putting ourselves in competition with the great cultivators of these plants, to do which, in this instance, neither the time nor the means are available.

Under Mason is a sub called Charles, a young man of about one-and-twenty who has been in my service three years. The third retainer is an old gentleman of the name of Freaks, still a good man of his hands, although I do not suppose that he will see seventy again. Some of his time, however, is occupied with work about the house, such as the cleaning of knives and boots, the bringing in of coal, and, until quite recently, when I procured an oil-engine, the driving of the pump pony, which took him an hour a day. In addition, there is a labouring man who comes when he is wanted, or when he does not think that the weather is too bad for outdoor work. Now, as all the Orchard ground is trenched, and put under crop, this will, I suppose, be very frequently indeed, although I hope and believe that the sale of the surplus produce which the household cannot consume will defray the cost of this extra labour.

That is all my staff, modest enough when the extent of ground and the number of glasshouses are considered, as, except in such a case as the digging of a pond which is now going on, the garden receives no help from my farm hands.

I ought to add, perhaps, that I have another garden at a place by the sea, Kessingland in Suffolk, quite a humble one, but with certain qualities of its own. Thus the vegetables grown there have a better flavour than any others with which I am acquainted, and the Asparagus is superb. Also Carnations flourish like weeds, all of which things, I suppose, are to be accounted for by the excellence of the soil and the abundance of salt in the air.

Of this garden doubtless I shall speak whenever I visit there. Also from time to time I may have something to say of other gardens and matters kindred to them, for this book is to be called "A Gardener's Year," and will tell of those things horticultural which interest that gardener wherever he may chance to wander or to tarry.

Now to my diary.

JANUARY

The first of January in this year of 1903 was a lovely frosty day, on which the sun shone as brightly, if not as warmly, as it is expected to do, but generally does not, at midsummer. All the local experts prophesied a long spell of hard weather, to meet which the usual preparations were made in the garden, frames being covered with mats, water run out of iron pipes, &c. They proved quite unnecessary, as the morning of the 2nd broke with pouring rain, which continued until noon, since when, until to-day, the 9th, we have had wet gales and mild, unseasonable weather; conditions under which a garden looks its worst.

It has been a week of odd jobs. In the Peach house Mason has pruned the trees, removing the old fruiting spurs, that are a great harbour for insects, and laying in the fresh wood in such a fashion as to allow a space of about five inches between the shoots, which are loosely, but neatly, tied to the wires with bast. It is curious to observe how, if left alone, such trees bear ever higher, the old wood below becoming hard and naked and producing no fruit. The explanation is, I suppose, that in a state of nature the topmost boughs get the sun. I spoke of insects, and even now, in winter and in this cold house, there, sure enough they are. Little brilliant patches of red spider they seem to be when examined through a reading-glass, hidden away as much out of sight as possible in the forks of the boughs, and even where the iron rods that support the wires run through the holes of the uprights.

In past years we have treated the trees for these and other pests with Gishurst's Compound, painted over every twig with a brush about this time; but in the present season I am experimenting on them with a spray made of Caustic Potash, Soda, and Soft Soap, mixed to half the strength only that we are using for the Apple and Pear trees. This, I think, can scarcely hurt them, although the buds seem somewhat forward for the season, and my hope is that its effects may prove more lasting than did those of the Gishurst.

In addition to the trimming and dressing of the trees we have syringed the outside of the glass to remove the dirt accumulated thereon, dug away the top soil carefully until we came to the fibrous roots, and replaced it with rotted turf, mixed with old mortar rubble, which all stone fruit so dearly love—I suppose because the lime helps them to form their stones as it does the bones in the bodies of children. While this whitewashing was going on we were careful to draw the three back trees somewhat forward from the wall, and to secure their boughs in a bundle with a rope, in order that the buds might escape rough handling and other injury.

I should add that I am watching the behaviour of those three trees this year with peculiar interest and for the following reason. Last September twelvemonth, having observed that for some seasons these trees had borne badly, we determined on heroic treatment, namely, the severance of their tap-roots. Here I must explain that when I built the wall against which they grow, I made the mistake of not standing that portion of it which is included in the Peach house upon arches, as the low front wall of that house is stood. Had I done so I could have prepared the soil behind the wall, and the roots of the trees passing through the arches would have fed thereon.

As it was, when I came to dig out the clay for the Peach bed and the border in front, I found that it would be dangerous to tamper with the subsoil near the foot of the wall, for fear lest I should crack the brickwork (which, indeed, to some extent happened) or even let it down bodily. Still I set my back trees in prepared surface soil, thinking, good easy man, that full surely they would push their roots forward into the beautiful deep compost in front. But observe the perversity of Peach nature. Instead of so doing, as was proved when we came to lift the trees, they sent their strong tap-roots straight into the hard blue clay behind, with the result that in after years the trees ran to rank wood and produced little fruit, most of it of but indifferent quality.

To return, we dared not dig out the tap-roots for fear of disturbing the foundations of the wall, so we severed them with a knife and left them, then replanted the trees in renovated soil with such fibrous roots as remained. Of course, they were then still in full leaf, with the result that within three weeks nothing could have looked more dead than they did. But I knew it was recommended that this operation should be carried out in September, in order to give the fibrous rootlets time to get a fresh hold of the soil before winter came, and took heart of grace. Nor was I disappointed, for, after having been pruned back severely in the winter, so that their few remaining roots might not have too much wood to support, they sprouted in the spring, and last year made some growth, on which I now perceive fruit buds. Still, at the best, they cannot come into full bearing again for another two seasons, and I am by no means certain that it would not have been better and more satisfactory in the long run to replace them with new trees.

While the frost lasted—that is, for one day only—the odd man, Knowles, was employed in barrowing well-rotted manure from the pony yard and applying a mulch to the roots of the recently planted Ribston and Cox's Orange pippins in the Orchard. I think that this cannot but be helpful to them, both by way of protecting them from frost, if we get any, and from drought; also of affording some nutriment to enable the disturbed roots to get a hold in their new home. I may say that we planted these bushes with great care, cutting away all damaged roots with a sharp knife, and having first gently spread them out, filling in between the fibrous ones that remained with good worked soil that was trodden firm. I trust, therefore, that they will take hold at once and go to work gaily in the spring, especially as they arrived from Belgium quite fresh and very little damaged.

When I determined to buy these Apples, I went into the question of cost, and for three-year-old Pyramids on the Paradise stock was asked by a large firm £10 a hundred, maidens of one year's growth being listed by the same firm at 1s. 6d. a-piece, though possibly I might have got these at somewhat less per hundred. Alarmed at these figures, which were more than I could afford to pay, I wrote to Belgium, and for the lot that I wanted was quoted 40s. a hundred for two-year-old bush trees on Paradise stock, plus the carriage, which came to but a few shillings more.

Let the reader observe the extraordinary difference between eighteenpence a-piece for *maiden* trees in England, and under fivepence a-piece for *two-year-old* trees (of, so far as I can judge, very good quality), or, with the carriage let us say sixpence, for foreign trees. Of course, I know that labour is cheaper in Belgium than it is here, but, making every allowance for this and other matters, is not the discrepancy altogether too great? Is it wonderful, moreover, that people to whom money is an object, should, under the circumstances, buy their stock abroad? Fifty per cent. they might sacrifice to patriotism, but a hundred per cent. or more!

Of course, I might, for ought I know, have procured the trees more reasonably elsewhere in England, but here are the prices taken from the catalogues of three leading nurserymen, on which I am able to lay my hands, two of them supposed to be very cheap:—

Catalogue 1.—Maiden Apples (*i.e.* one-year-old trees), 9s. a dozen. Bush or Pyramids (I suppose of two, or perhaps three years old), 24s. a dozen.

Catalogue 2.—Pyramids, two years old, 10s. a dozen.

Catalogue 3.—Maidens, 12s. a dozen. Pyramids (three to four feet), 3s. 6d. to 5s. *each.*

These prices speak for themselves.

On the 3rd we made up a new Mushroom bed, the first being already in fair, although not very plentiful, bearing, in the little brick building by the boiler house, whence it acquires a certain amount of warmth from the wall and chimney (too much as I think), which building I use for this purpose, also for forcing Seakale, Rhubarb, &c. I have the advantage of procuring my Mushroom manure from the farm, although this cannot be done except during the winter, when the horses have ceased to be fed on green food, and especially upon carrots, which are perfect poison to Mushrooms.

We collect the manure and store it in a shed, shaking and turning it every day or two until it is sweet. Then it is wheeled to the bed, which is made of rough planks and packed firmly to a depth of, say, twelve inches. When the temperature has sunk to about 75 deg., and is still lessening, pieces of spawn of the size of a walnut are inserted in the manure with the hands, four or five inches apart, and a few days later the bed, which has been well rammed, is coated with soil. Then, in from a month to six weeks, the tiny white heads of the Mushrooms should appear thickly, that is, if things go well. But this is not always the case, since sometimes no Mushrooms appear, and sometimes, after appearing, many of them go off in a way which is quite unaccountable, and this though every rule of Mushroom-growing is strictly followed.

My own belief is that when these failures happen, in the majority of cases at any rate, it is the manure that is to blame, as one cannot always be sure that the farm horses have not been given beet or other food which may prove injurious to Mushrooms. Or, perhaps, although I have ventilated it with a movable shutter in the door, and cased the chimney round with brick, the heat from the boiler house still at times makes the place too dry. Personally, I think, indeed, that Mushrooms do best without any artificial heat. On the whole, however, we have no great reason to complain.

This Mushroom house, by the way, is already producing some dishes of Seakale, which is very nice and tender.

For the rest, we have been employed during the week—that is, when the wind is not so high that it blows the poisonous mixture back into the sprayer's face—in syringing the fruit trees with the Caustic Potash wash, mixed in the following proportions: One pint solution of Caustic Potash, one pound Caustic Soda, three-quarters of a pound Soft Soap; all mixed together in ten gallons of water.

For this purpose I use a Vermorel's "Eclair" Knapsack sprayer, an excellent copper contrivance, with a hand pump attached, which Mason straps on to his back. It holds about three and a quarter gallons, and throws the spray high enough to treat my standard Apple trees in still weather, but I find that the Caustic Potash is somewhat ruinous to india-rubber tubing.

It is really wonderful to see what an effect this mixture, which I am now using for the first time, has upon the unwholesome green mould that collects about the bark of fruit trees and becomes the harbouring place of injurious insects. To-day I was looking at two trees standing side by side, one of which has, and the other has not been dressed. The sprayed tree is perfectly clean, but even from a distance I could see the green colour of that which is not yet treated. I imagine, however, that it would be dangerous to use this wash after the buds are at all forward, as it seems very powerful, enough so, I trust, to keep down that scourge, the American blight, with which we are a good deal tormented on certain trees. This is scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that every farm orchard in the neighbourhood is full of it, and the insect, with its cotton-wool like covering, can be carried by the wind.

Also, we have been engaged in breaking up gravel paths to kill the moss and grass, and re-rolling them; in clearing dead leaves and boughs and in odd jobs, such as fying out the drain ditch in the Orchard; unstopping some pipes which had become blocked with the roots of creepers, a task that can be done with more or less safety at this time of year, and moving Chrysanthemums from the Fig house, throwing away those of them that are not needed to produce a second supply of cuttings.

When I laid down my pen two days ago I spoke of unstopping certain pipes as though that job were done with, but this was not the case. Indeed, all yesterday a bricklayer and his boy, with the assistance of a carpenter and Freaks, were engaged upon this most awkward task, of which the results proved excessively curious. The cemented, earthenware soft-water pipes, which were blocked, run from the outside of the house beneath the floor of the kitchen into a tank in the back yard. A little investigation showed that the traps were completely choked with roots. Round these ropes were made fast, and three or four of us, pulling as hard as we could, succeeded in dragging out two solid cores of fibre, five or six feet in length.

As the drain proved to be still obstructed, it then became necessary to break up the outside pipes and to remove more roots, and ultimately to take up the floor of the kitchen and there break into it again. What followed was very strange. Taking hold of the mass of fibre, the bricklayer began to draw, and out of the drain came foot after foot of what looked like an endless tress of hair. At length it was all dragged forth, fortunately without breaking. Will it be believed that those roots, which I have photographed, measured no less than twenty feet in length, or, with the portions which had been broken off before, about thirty feet? Travelling from the outside wall where this hungry Ampelopsis grows, they passed all the way under the kitchen floor and the opposing wall till they reached the soft water tank in the yard beyond.

Indeed, I have little doubt but that they knew that the moisture of which they are so greedy was to be found there, and patiently crept along the dark underground pipe until, at length, after years of growth perhaps, they reached it, and, in the mysterious method which nature has provided, drew up the water through all those yards of tiny root-veins to be used by the shining leaves forty or sixty feet away. No wonder that this creeper flourished so remarkably, and its leaves were so large and vigorous that I always supposed the plant to be of a different species to others of its kind which grow about the house.

The lesson of this experience is that Ampelopsis is a very dangerous vine to plant where drain pipes abound, since its roots seem to have the power of working their way even through cement. Still, I have not been able to make up my mind to destroy this fine specimen and leave an ugly gable, covered over with a network of practically irremovable branches. Perhaps, however, it will not survive the exceedingly severe root-pruning to which it has been subjected. Had this been carried out in summer certainly it would not have done so.[1]

As the weather is so bad, let us take a walk round the houses, the great resource of winter when the garden looks bare and desolate, although to those that love it, it is almost as full of interest then as at any other time.

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[1] The Ampelopsis did not suffer at all. It was as vigorous as ever this summer.—December 1903.

In the Cool greenhouse, where we will begin, there is not much bloom, still some early Primulas look gay and a few pots of Violets smell sweet. Salvia Splendens, the gorgeous scarlet kind, one of the most effective plants I know, is going over. We grow this flower in the garden in summer and pot it up for the greenhouse before the frost comes. A yellow Cissus looks well, and the seedling Cyclamen are beginning to flower, also a few older bulbs of a fine white variety. To my mind, however, this plant is nowhere so beautiful as I have seen it wild on the roadsides of Cyprus or nestling amidst its native rocks in Syria.

Close to these on the front stage stand some pots of Auriculas bearing a few blooms. At present they are rather insignificant, but when they get their young foliage and throw up strong stems of flower they are hard to beat for beauty. Here also I have two pots of that lovely thing Lapageria Alba, on one of which a wax-like bell still hangs. They have done fairly well, but I intend to take up some of the pammets and plant them in the ground in a suitable mixture of peat, loam, and brick-dust, in the hope that in time they may cover the roof.

Some pots of Freesia Refracta Alba, with its delicate grass-like foliage one of the sweetest-scented and most satisfactory of the Cape bulbs, are showing plentifully for flower, but in this low temperature are not out as yet, although I have a few blooms in the warmer house next door. On the hanging shelf near the glass stand Hyacinths, their healthy green spikes pushing well above the edges of the pots, and below them a couple of pans of the early Roman sort, covered with tresses of white bloom, while on a top shelf against the back wall my Amaryllis bulbs are at rest. I grow these cool, and by giving them plenty of sun obtain fair results, but there is no doubt that they do best in heat, which they should have were it at my disposal. One year I plunged them in leaves in the front bed of what is now the Cold orchid house and turned on all the pipes beneath. The results were gorgeous, although I remember that the slugs from which we were unable to free the dead leaves, proved very troublesome.

In the Warm greenhouse beyond the glass door, which I keep at a temperature of about 60, although in this old, unshaded vinery, as it was once, the sun heat, when there is any, often runs it up much higher in the mornings, three hanging plants of the beautiful pink-hued Gloire de Lorraine Begonia seem to light up the whole place. My experience of this variety is limited, and of it, as, indeed, of all other matters, I speak subject to correction. These three plants were the first that I procured, and were, I think, struck a year ago. Last season they did not do much, although I industriously pinched out their ever-pushing flower-buds, but now they are fair-sized specimens and masses of drooping bloom. I have, however, seen much finer plants, and conclude, therefore, that, if cut down, they improve from year to year, although I think it probable that they would grow quicker in strong heat.

On the stage beneath stand some Anthuriums Scherzerianum of the smaller and the larger sort, plants of which I am particularly fond, as their intense scarlet spathes last for months. Now they are just pushing bright red blooms from the bases of the leaf-stalks, and in another month will make a fine show of colour; indeed, one or two flowers are already open. I re-potted these plants in the beginning of December last, in a compost largely composed of Belgium leaf-mould, although I believe that January is the time generally recommended. However this may be, they seem to be flourishing, and have thrown up some fine large leaves. I find them of slow growth, but perhaps they also would increase quicker in more heat; still, they do well enough as they are.

Amongst other objects on the back stage stand about a dozen large pots of Imantophyllums, also very slow growers. Of these two were sent to me many years ago from Zululand. One bears clusters of small flowers unlike any that I have seen elsewhere, and blooms profusely about the beginning of December; indeed, it is now over after standing for a month or so in the hall of this house. The other has a rather curious history.

About fourteen years ago my late friend, Sir Melmoth Osborn, who was then Commissioner for Zululand, saw the plant growing on a tree in the forest, and observed that it had pure yellow blooms. He transplanted it into a tub in front of his Residency, and offered a reward for similar plants, but in vain. A piece of it he sent to me, which in due course flowered, and proved a very fine variety, but of the ordinary reddish colour. Afterwards a daughter of Sir Melmoth, who chanced to be staying with me, informed me that a piece of the same plant, grown by her in Maritzburg, in Natal, had played the same prank, namely, thrown up reddish blooms, whereas another piece of it, which her father had given to a friend, also in Natal, produced the true yellow blooms. Why this should be so is more than I can explain, but I live in hope that a time may come when my plant will change its mind and bloom yellow like its ancestor, or, rather, itself.

The year before last I made the mistake of re-potting these Imantophyllums, which I think should be done as rarely as possible, with the result that last season they hardly bloomed at all. This year, however, after standing all the summer, and, indeed, until November, in the Peach house, they are throwing up a quantity of flower. I dose them rather highly with chemical and liquid cow manures.

Other objects in this house are Hyacinths in a more advanced stage, though not yet in bloom, and some pots of Lilies-of-the-valley standing on the floor near the hot-water pipes to bring them into flower naturally with their leaves in the early spring. I do not force these, as I have no convenience for so doing; also we lack time to attend to everything, and are therefore content to have the flowers in their season. I should, however, like to try some of the retarded crowns; that is, those which have been chilled like New Zealand mutton, and when thawed, begin to grow at any season of the year.

All things will not force well — some varieties of tulips, for instance. I have a lamentable example before me in this very house. Some Tulips which I procured—I forget where—were potted up to make a little show with the Hyacinths. Three pots of them have now come into bloom, and a more ridiculous sight cannot be imagined, for the flowers, unaccompanied by any leaves, have opened literally on the surface of the soil, as though they had been broken off short and stuck into it. The right sorts of Tulips, however, such as the scarlet Duc Van Thol, Rose Luisante, and Yellow Prince, to name a few, force very well. I wonder, by the way, if many gardeners are aware how deep rooted the Tulip, or some varieties of it, is in its natural state. In the near East—that is, by the Mediterranean—I have seen it blooming in ploughed fields and, to the best of my recollection, dug down ten or twelve inches without reaching the bulb.

In the Cold orchid house there is one really beautiful thing now blooming, namely the odorous Cymbidium Tracyanum, with its indescribable flower borne upon an erect stalk. Also the Cyms. Lowianum are beginning to show their spikes, and a few Masdevallias are in flower, including the curious M. Torta, brownish and purple striped, with its deep cup and pinkish tongue.

In the Intermediate house there is more to be seen, especially a good show of Lælia Anceps, that graceful, starry flower, though not so good as it ought to be, owing to the lack of sun last year. What, I wonder, can be more effective than twenty or thirty bending scapes of these gorgeous blooms? Also there is a nice plant of one of the Barkeria genus—not Elegans, my specimen of that is over after doing its duty and taking a prize at the Norwich show. I believe that these Barkerias are supposed to be hard to grow, but my two plants do very well with me, the Elegans after seven or eight years of cultivation. I find it most difficult, however, to protect the roots they throw out from the slugs and woodlice, which simply raven for them. On this Barkeria Elegans in spite of every precaution to be rid of them, last autumn I trapped no less than eleven small yellow slugs, a new variety to me which I have never seen on any other Orchid.

Along the front bench a dozen or more Cattleyas Labiata Autumnalis are still blooming brightly. I consider this and C. Mossiæ, of which I have a good supply, sent to me from Venezuela—as, I think, the best thing that troublous land produces—the two most useful of the Cattleyas, also the easiest to bloom. On the back bench the fleshy and noble-looking Lycastes Skinnerii are beginning to flower, though not very freely, as most of them are newly imported plants; and above them is a specimen of a long-tailed Masdevallia Macrura, which seems to flourish here in the shade. On the centre-stand the most noticeable thing is a specimen of Lælia Purpurata, which I take to be the king of all Orchids for beauty, with its purple-throated, sweet-scented cup, as Angræcum Sesquipedale is perhaps the queen. Still, I have not found this Lælia a very free bloomer, nor do I ever remember it in flower at this time of year before. About May or June is its usual period, although most of the bloom-sheaths are thrown up in late autumn, and sometimes perish prematurely in the winter.

My best show just now, however, is in the Cool orchid house in the New garden. Here the Cypripediums are in bloom—quite a forest of stately flowers, that is, considering that my collection is not large. I counted about one hundred and fifty of them out this afternoon, and now that we have arranged them nicely, setting some upon inverted pots to break the line, really they are imposing. Most of these are the old C. Insigne in its different forms, but there are others also, such as C. Leeanum, the beautiful cross between Insigne and Spicerianum; C. Nitens, which is a hybrid between C. Villosum and C. Insigne Maulei, also a plant or two of C. Spicerianum itself, and of an ivory-white Cypripedium with a very large flower, whose parentage I do not know. Then there is a fine specimen of C. Harrisianum Nigrum almost black in hue.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all, however, are two plants, each with a single flower, of C. Insigne Cobbianum a bloom of medium size of the purest yellow, having the dorsal sepal only very faintly spotted and edged on the upper half with white. I saw a somewhat smaller plant of this variety priced in a catalogue the other day at eight guineas, but mine cost me ten shillings each at one of Messrs. Protheroe & Morris's sales. The best of these yellow varieties of Insigne is said to be Insigne Sanderæ, which has green stems and, I believe, although I have never been so fortunate as even to see it in flower, a large sulphur-yellow bloom. It is, however, much too expensive for me, as a small plant of it still sells for £8 or £12, and must continue to be costly until the subdivisions from the original imported root, or seedlings raised from it, are much more numerous than at present.

Here I should like to say a few words as to the expense of Orchid-growing, which is popularly supposed to be a form of horticulture that only rich men can face. This is not at all my experience. If they are bought with discretion, or, better still, imported, all the best and most easily grown varieties of Orchids can now be had for a few shillings each, and if they are understood and properly managed many of these should actually increase in value. When we see that a large sum of money, say two or four hundred pounds, has been given for an Orchid, it means that the plant differs from the type in some particular, not that it is necessarily more beautiful, and has been purchased by a wealthy person who wishes to possess what his neighbours have not got. Or it may be that it is a new species which afterwards becomes quite common. Thus I believe that the first discovered plant of Cyp. Spicerianum fetched over three hundred pounds. To-day the value of a similar plant would be about three shillings.

Cymbidium Tracyanum is another instance of the same thing, a fact of which I have painful experience. About ten years ago Mr. Tracy bought me a root of Cymbidium in the saleroom for twelve shillings, because he said the bulbs reminded him of his original C. Tracyanum. Three or four years later, before it had flowered, he offered me a hundred pounds for that plant, being certain that it was the true Tracyanum. I refused it, to some extent because I found it hard to bring myself to part with it, and still more, I think, because I was afraid that he might be mistaken as to the variety, and find himself saddled with a valueless article. Three years later the plant bloomed for the first time, and proved to be a bright and good variety of Tracyanum, but by then its habitat had been discovered, and the selling value was but small.

One piece of luck I did have, however. I bought a root of Vanda Cœrulea for a shilling or two, which, when it flowered, proved to have the peculiarity of producing two white blooms at the top of the spray. This plant I sold for twenty guineas, and I believe that it died afterwards. My advice to all Orchid growers, unless they happen to be very rich, is to turn any sport of the kind into money at once.

To return: Two pounds is the most I ever gave for an Orchid, and the extravagance is not one that I shall repeat, except perhaps in the case of a Cypripedium or other variety which I knew would, with ordinary care, grow into greater value.

The whole question of Orchid-culture, that most delightful of all gardening pursuits, is very fascinating, but here I cannot dwell on it at length. This I will say, however, that unless the would-be grower is prepared to love and to learn to understand his Orchids he had far better leave them alone. To abandon them to the hands of any casual gardener, who often proves ignorant, or obstinate, or both, will frequently only mean a gigantic bill, dying plants, and very few flowers. Once I knew some unfortunate people who were suddenly presented with an account for £3000, incurred, practically without their knowledge, by the head gardener. They told me that they fought the case, but lost it, as the gardener was held to have an implied authority to purchase what he liked. No wonder they added that they never again wished to hear the word Orchid mentioned.

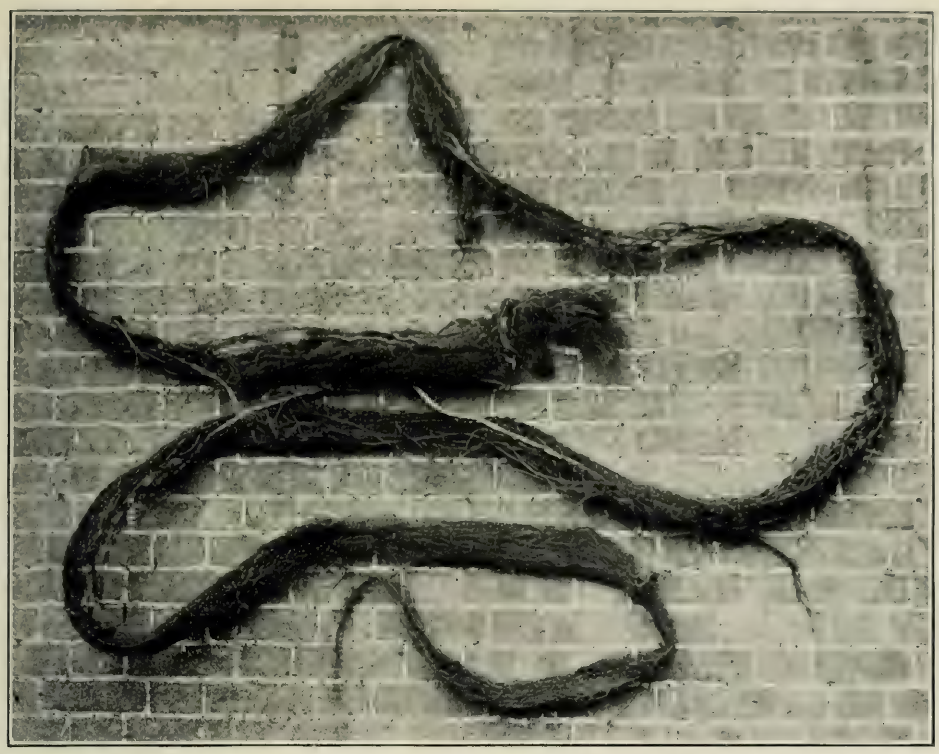
In my own humble case I taught myself how to grow the plants, and afterwards taught my gardeners. Indeed, up to the present time, save now and again in salerooms, I have seen but few Orchids except my own. Yet the results have been on the whole delightful, and the show of bloom by no means to be despised, although, of course. my little collection cannot in any way compete with that of the great growers, as I am a general gardener, and with our very limited staff we cannot give up too much time to Orchids. I have only shown mine at the Norwich shows where, with a single exception, they have taken the first prizes on every occasion that they were exhibited. I mention this in no spirit of boastfulness, but because it suggests, though doubtless they would be beaten out of the field in London, that we have attained to some measure of success in their cultivation. This, indeed, when once their needs are understood, in the case of many of the varieties, at any rate, I find to be easier than that of most greenhouse plants. Also the majority of them require but little heat with its consequent expenditure in fuel.

Before I leave this Cool house, there are two more plants to which I should like to draw attention. One is Cypripedium Actæus, of which I have a single bloom, the child of the famous C. Sanderæ that I have spoken of, and C. Leeanum Superbum. It is a beautiful thing and very large, although the bud was singularly small, and in appearance resembles a fine but yellowish variety of C. Leeanum. Having a double strain of the robust C. Insigne in its veins, it should also, I imagine, possess an excellent constitution. The other plant is of quite a different character, being a Masdevallia Tovarensis, the only white-flowered variety of that genus. This came from Messrs. Veitch a few years ago, when it bore a single spike of bloom. Two seasons later I broke the plant up and re-potted the growths in a basket; I think that was about twenty months ago. Now, for it is a winter bloomer, it has thrown up no less than fourteen stems, most of them carrying two of the dazzling white-tailed flowers, and at the same time is pushing vigorous growths. A lovely sight truly, and, had I the time, one at which I could gaze for hours.

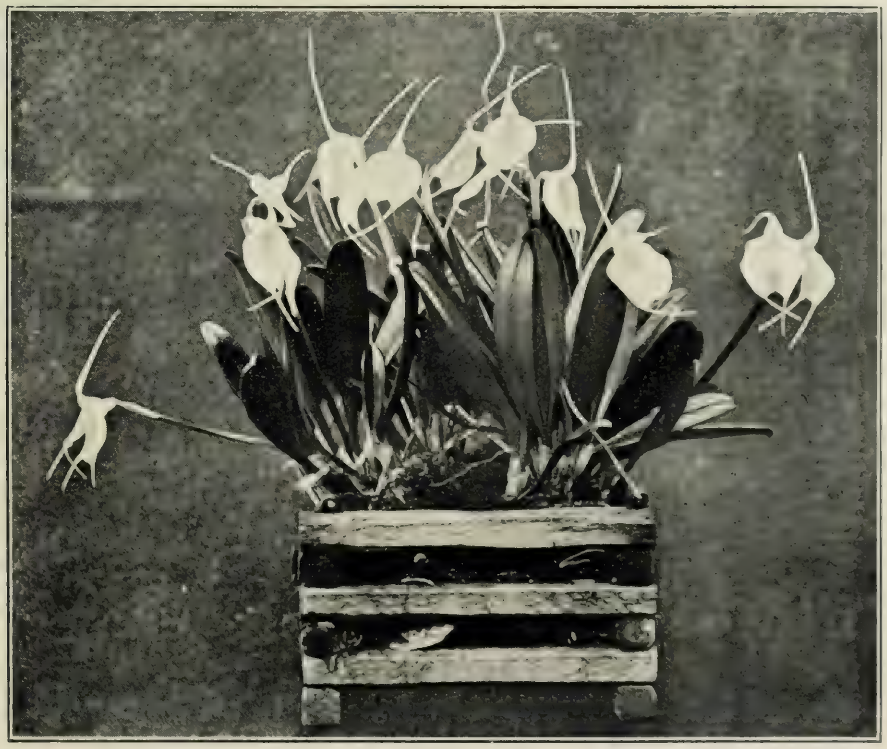
On the hanging and other shelves of this house, and suspended from the roof, are my baskets of that perfect flower, often so badly managed, Cœlogyne Cristata, now spiking up for bloom. But of these I hope to speak when they come to beauty in a month or six weeks' time.

In the little Warm orchid house beyond, which is kept generally at a temperature of about 60, there is not very much to be seen, although the sweet-scented Vanda Amesiana is in bloom, also some Cyps. Barbatum, looking very dark and handsome, and a plant of Cyp. Tonsum, with its tessellated foliage and pale but noble and lasting bloom, and a few Cyps. Calurum with their rosy red flowers, and of those perpetual bloomers, Cyp. Sedeni. There are other things which I should like to stop to mention, but I cannot do so.

Although it is only the beginning of January, there are various signs of growth in the garden, premature as I



ROOT OF AMPELOPSIS VEITCHII, AS DRAWN FROM SOFT WATER DRAIN (*See page* 23)



MASDEVALLIA TOVARENSIS (*Bloomed at* DITCHINGHAM)

fear. Thus a single Snowdrop has thrust up its sweet white bud from a clump which for many years I have noticed to be the earliest in the place. The sight of the first Snowdrop always moves me—foolishly almost. Perhaps it is its perfect beauty, perhaps it is the promise that it gives of winter which shall pass away and of summer that shall come, and the evidence there before our eyes of the eternal resurrection of all things that are. Or perhaps it is some memory of childhood when flowers like to these were pointed out to me by voices now long stilled. I know not; but I find it difficult to look at the first Snowdrop without emotion.

On the north-east corner of this house, near to the yellow Jasmines that are in full bloom hard by, the big Honeysuckle which I transplanted from a hedge shows its shoots of tender green, while beneath the shelter of a Holly bush the foliage of the Lords and Ladies have pushed their tight curls an inch above the soil. Also, and this fills me with alarm for its subsequent well-being, a hybrid Magnolia has begun to sprout from between its brown leaf cases.

I am alarmed because this little bush is one of several that I bought some years ago at Messrs. Protheroe's, which were stated at the auction to be rare varieties imported from America. The journey or the length of the time they had been out of the ground had well-nigh killed them, and now, after three years or so in pots, I have only just felt inclined to take the risk of bedding-out in the open the three of them that have survived. Whether they will continue to survive is another matter, especially if they begin to push leaves in January. Probably they are quite unaquainted with the vagaries of the British climate, which hitherto they have only contemplated through the comfortable shelter of a glasshouse.

Upon a dying Oak tree on the Back lawn, too, where, by the way, a rabbit has succeeded in burrowing under the wire netting, the Clematis is awake, and the Crimson Rambler rose shows its leaf-points. Most curious of all, however, is the sight to be seen in the pond on the Front lawn. Here I have planted a few hybrid Water-lilies, with beautiful yellow and scarlet blooms and reddish coloured leaves that a friend gave to me, unfortunately without their names. Not ten days ago this pond was covered with ice, but now, to my astonishment, I see beneath the water not only the leaves of my Nymphæas in good growth, but actually on one plant, that beneath an over-hanging Hawthorn tree, three well-formed buds. Our native Water-lily does not seem to behave in this fashion, at least mine show no signs of life.

On the sloping bulb-bed round this pond I observed the other day that mice had been at work, as they have also among the early Peas sown in November in the garden. So we set two traps, for mice are reprehensively fond of Crocus and Tulip bulbs, covering the traps with old tiles, out of consideration for the birds. Next day I went to visit these traps, and found, alas! no mice, but a poor little robin, caught (happily) by the head. This bold bird, for the confidence of its kind in man, at any rate here, is wonderful, drawn on by a passion for toasted cheese, had not been afraid to creep beneath the arch of the tile, and thus bring himself to doom. Well, his end was swift.

Wonderful are the ways of the British climate! When I laid down my pen ten days since, the weather was so open that I noted a pansy in bloom upon the bed that I made a year or so ago beneath the great Elms, in which to plant perennials and odds and ends that do not object to shade, or, at least, will thrive moderately therein. Since then we have had frost so severe that there was skating (for two days only) on the Lawn pond. This lasted until the evening of the 17th, when it looked as if it would endure for weeks. That night, however, there came a sudden change, followed by rain, and now on the 20th, for three days we have lived in a reeking, white mist which is worse than any rain and almost as wetting.

This Elm-tree bed is bordered along the path that runs to the lawn-tennis courts with the best rockery that I could make. It is not a very grand one, as in this district the proper materials, such as porous stone, are lacking. So we were obliged to eke out with innutritious flints, of which a number, some of them of large size, are now being dug from the clay in course of removal to enlarge the Old kitchen-garden pond, clinkers from the furnace, and various tree stumps.

The hardy things planted among them, however, seem to flourish pretty well, although the constant sucking of the Elm roots impoverishes the soil and makes the place too dry for ferns. Indeed, with one of these I have had a sad failure. In the early part of last year I procured three specimens of the stately Osmunda Regalis from Devonshire, and planted them down by the Lawn pond in the little bed which I made at the edge of the water. Here they did not thrive at all, either because their roots were too wet, or perhaps the sun burnt them, although of this there was little enough last year. So I moved them to the Elm-tree rockery, where they appear to have rewarded my attentions by dying altogether. I shall not try any more Osmundas, although I know a beautiful specimen that grows at the edge of a pond about nine miles away.

Speaking of flints, I have heard that, by means of accretions of silica or otherwise, these stones grow like animate things. If so, I wonder how long one of them which has just been dug out of the pond clay has taken to reach its present size. It would make a fair load for a barrow, and has a grey surface suggestive of extreme antiquity, as though its first youth, indeed, was spent tens of millions of years ago. Also, where do they grow—in the clay where one finds them, or in chalk, beneath the beds of lakes and oceans, or in far parts of our island, from which, æons since, they have been brought by travelling glacier-ice, and when do they stop growing?

Another question: What makes the flints work up to the surface of the soil, as I observe that they do continually upon the plough lands, so that, however often they are picked off, there always seem to be just as many left next year? My Encyclopædia teaches me nothing on these points, and my general information may be erroneous. Perhaps this clay was once a sea-bed, and in it the flints have lain from the beginning. Only I see no shells and little chalk, whereas seventy feet farther down or so, as I know from stuff brought from the bottom of our wells, is a true sea beach made up of broken shells such as we find upon the shore to-day.

But whether its growth took place in clay and chalk, covered with water or with grass, what an uncanny thing is a flint increasing there deep down, perhaps so slowly that ten thousand years may make no difference that the eye can measure. Yet increasing always, as surely as the tuber of a Potato plant, and at length, when it is weary of the darkness, remembering perhaps that it also has fire at its heart, working its way upwards into the light of the sun above, there, I suppose, to dissolve away almost as slowly as it has gathered. And when at length everything is finished and it has returned to its original elements, and changed its form, mayhap into a solution of silica, or a gas, or the bones of a child, or the brain of a genius, or anything that goes to form this awful universe, what is the difference between its life and that of the tuber aforesaid, which also grew in the dark and has been transformed and also is as eternal as the suns? A certain period of time, that is all. And what is time?

To return to our cabbages. Knowles has been engaged in transplanting a number of large winter Broccoli which have been laid upon their sides and earthed up to protect them from the frost, as the new path in the Orchard is to run through this bed. The Broccoli is a vigorous vegetable, and does not seem to mind any amount of transplanting—at least, Mason declares that this removal will not hurt them.

On the 9th we went through the Cool orchid house and finished rearranging the Cypripediums so as to show off their flowers to the best advantage. Also we removed the dead leaves from the Cœlogynes which are now spiking up for bloom—those of them that mean to bloom. Some do not. These were replanted three years ago, the bulbs being thoroughly broken up and set afresh. Doubtless this is a good thing to do every eight or ten years, but the Cœlogyne is an Orchid that detests interference, and often will not flower afterwards for several seasons. Curiously enough, however, there are exceptions to this rule; thus I think the first Orchid that ever I possessed was two or three bulbs of Cœlogyne Cristata which were given to me fifteen or sixteen years ago by a neighbour, and that I named after her C. Cristata, *var.* Mrs. Marshall.

This variety is by far the finest that I have ever met with, although, of course, there may be others as good or better. It is of vigorous growth, and produces a profusion of flowers of great size and solidity, generally five of them to a spray. Indeed, I have seen my largest plant, which has increased from the original two bulbs to a specimen of over eighteen inches in diameter, almost hidden by the wealth of its own inflorescence. Other points about this sort are that the flower-spikes never seem to blacken and damp off, as is sometimes the case with Cœlogynes if they receive too much water while pushing up, and it does not in the least mind being transplanted. Thus this very year, in addition to the original specimen, I have two good-sized plants grown from it, which were moved last summer and now are as full of bloom as ever, whereas, *per contra*, as I have said, other varieties re-potted two years ago have not yet recovered the shock. Naturally, therefore, my object is by degrees to replace all my stock of Cœlogynes with plants of Mrs. Marshall.

In this Cool orchid house hung and stood some plants of Cattleyas Trianæ, Labiata and Mossiæ. The Mossiæ seem to be doing well—they are plants sent to me by my brother from Venezuela last year—but the Trianæ and Labiata appear to find the place too cold, at least their growths are somewhat yellow. Therefore I have decided to move them into the more genial atmosphere of the Intermediate house, where, I trust, they will recover their pristine health. Of course, my object in scattering Cattleyas about in all the houses is to prolong their respective periods of bloom. The Calanthes in the Warm house are, I notice, not throwing up the amount of flower they ought to do. These are plants that love heat, and as I have not enough of it to suit them I shall give them away.

The 10th was a beautiful day, mild and sunny, of which we took advantage to plant some more Globe Artichokes on the shady side of the Orchard, so that their fruit—should it not be their flower, for they are nothing but big thistle blooms?—may follow on that of their parents in the Stable garden. This is an excellent vegetable of which I am very fond, and one that I do not think is made half enough use of in England. In France and Italy it is different. There they appreciate the Globe Artichoke at its proper worth, but they do not wait to cut it until it is the size of a tea-plate and as hard as horn, which the English gardener loves to do. Also we sowed some Radish and Lettuce seed in the Peach house to come on early, and Bedingfield rolled the lawn with the light roller.

I have had a serious consultation with Mason as to the condition of the double tennis-court. Its history is not uninstructive, and may be useful to other gardeners who contemplate the making of such lawns; therefore, I will state it briefly. These courts were made about twelve years ago by the taking in of a piece of the Back lawn and the filling up of the ditch that ran between it and the garden, at the bottom of which dyke were laid large earthenware pipes to carry the water, fitted at either end with a key-heading and an iron grate. The land having been levelled, to do which it was necessary to cut away a good deal of the soil from the top end, leaving the stiff clay exposed, it was deep-drained with pipes, too deep as it now appears, and the error of judgment was made of filling in the trenches with clay instead of with cinder dirt or some other porous substance. Had I been at home at the time I do not think that this would have happened.

The turf was then relaid, for the most part on the clay. It took well enough, but there appeared in the next and following years so fearful a crop of weeds—Plaintains, Dandelions, Buttercups, Daisies, &c.—that it seemed impossible to cope with them. After he and his myrmidons had dug away at these weeds for several autumns, till, as he put it, "their backs fared fit to break," my old gardener of those days persuaded me that the best thing to do was to take up the turf and re-sow the lawn with seeds. Luckily, as it proved, I only consented to the experiment being tried upon one half of the courts.

Now it was that we made another great mistake. In order to succeed, as I shall show presently by another instance, grass seeds must be sown in really good, prepared soil. Thus I should have trenched my clay, mixed it with burnt earth, wood ashes, thoroughly rotted manure, basic slag, &c., allowed it to winter in order to kill the weed seeds and tap-roots, and then have sown in the spring. In the spring I did sow, but without these precautions, or, at any rate, sufficient of them, the seeds practically having only the cold clay for a germinating bed. Still, they came up in a fashion, but so did millions of weeds, far more, indeed, than had appeared in the old turf.

Now when this happens folk are very apt to blame the seedsman. The truth is, of course, that the subsoil of most land, often to a considerable depth, is absolutely full of the germs of weeds which, as I believe, have in many instances lain there for long periods of time, possibly even for some hundreds of years, waiting their opportunity of life. But of this fascinating subject I have written in my work, "Rural England," in the chapter upon Cambridgeshire, and also, I think, in "A Farmer's Year," so I cannot go into it again now.

At any rate, the last state of that lawn was far worse than the first, since the weeds on the sown part were more while the grass was thinner than on that which had been left under the natural turf. For the past ten years or so have we been engaged in eradicating these pests—barrow loads of them every autumn—and in encouraging the fine grasses with basic slag, sifted garden soil, wood ashes, and so forth. One spring I even penned a flock of sheep and lambs upon the lawn, a very messy business, but one which gave good results. The end of it, after all this time, is that the courts are quite as good as any in the neighbourhood, especially in dry weather, although a quantity of daisies and buttercups still put in an appearance every spring. But the one which was left under the natural turf remains rather better than that which was sown.

For the last few years, however, I suppose under the constant pressure of rolling and treading, the clay has become so consolidated that the drains beneath draw with great slowness, and when heavy rain has fallen the ground for several days is but a swamp. Under these circumstances, we have determined to put in three new drains leading to a main at the bottom of the wet portion, for, near the filled-in ditch, where the tree roots have sucked the soil, it is dry enough, replacing the excavated clay over them with clinkers and cinder dirt, topped, of course, with a few inches of good soil. This, I think, ought to meet the case, and, if it does not, another drain or two can be added next year.

I spoke above of the advantages of good soil for grass seeds, and of this I will give an example. At the house that I have at Kessingland, in Suffolk, situated upon the very edge of the sea-cliff, where the land, if rather sticky, is most productive, I set to work three years ago to make a full-sized croquet-court. The piece of ground to be treated had for many years been under Lucerne. Remembering my Ditchingham experience, I began by getting this up with a pony plough in the summer when the sun was hot. Then, after the weeds had commenced to spring, I dug it over deeply, raked up their roots and those of the Lucerne, burnt them, and scattered the ashes on the soil. This process I repeated several times throughout the winter, autumn, and early spring as opportunity offered, only now I used the hoe and the rake more than the spade.

About April, the land having been got thoroughly true with a spirit level, after a final hoeing to kill the spring weeds, I sowed my lawn seeds, which came up thick as fur. Beyond pulling up any obvious weeds I did not interfere with the grass until about July, when I mowed it for green fodder, after which I left it to stand and seed itself in autumn. Next year, with the usual mowings and rollings, it was a very fair croquet-court, though too thick with clover to play fast. Last summer it had improved still further, and now in January, after careful weeding in the autumn, it looks like making a really first-class lawn when the sucklings and clovers have lessened, which I think they will do largely within the next few years. This court, I should add, has not been drained, although the soil is of a somewhat stiff nature, as it runs to the edge of a cliff, over forty feet in height, which I think allows all unnecessary moisture to escape by evaporation.

I make no apology for having dwelt a little on this question of lawns, since I know, from many sad instances, my own included, how much annoyance, disappointment, and expense result from initial mistakes in their manufacture, and my experience may be of assistance to others engaged therein.

The other day, when the lights were off to let the damp get to them, for I set a frame to protect their flowers from frost and wet, I examined my bed of Christmas Roses, which are planted in a rather shady place at the end of the Cold orchid house under the shelter of a few feet of Holly hedge. There is a fair show of their pure white bloom, so welcome at this dead season of the year, and, I may add, so useful for cutting. I cannot say, however, that these lovely flowers do very well with me, although the bed for them, made a good many years ago, was carefully dug out and refilled with prepared soil, and they have received dressings of artificial manure. My own impression is that our local climate is too dry for them, a trouble to which the Holly roots may add. Last summer I tried to overcome this by soaking them with buckets of water whenever they seemed thirsty, and in the result there is some improvement. Still, they do not resemble the grand clumps of Helleborus Niger that I have seen in moister counties. That these love damp seems to be proved by the fact of their flourishing so vigorously in the mild, misty atmosphere of Ireland.

Also, I have been doing something that I am not certain is quite wise, namely, cutting the grease bands off my Apple trees. For these last two years I have taken to this grease-banding as a preventive against the Winter-moth, which creeps up the trunks at that season of the year and lays its eggs in the crevices of the bark, whence in due course are produced the grubs that do so much damage to the Apples. Grease-banding, I should explain, is best carried out by fastening strips of prepared paper with a double string round the trunks of the tree at about eighteen inches from the ground. On this paper the special grease is then smeared thickly. When the custom first came in, it was common to paint the grease upon the trunk of the tree without any intervening paper, a very injurious habit.

In the Vale of Evesham, that great home of orchards, I have seen hundreds of trees of which the bark is scorched and disfigured, and, I should imagine, permanently injured also, by this practice of painting the grease direct on to it in past years, which must seal up its pores and prevent proper and natural growth. Now, however, the fruit growers have found this out, and, I believe, invariably use paper.

The reason that I have removed my bands so early is twofold. First, I do not believe that we have any Winter-moth about this year on these young trees. At any rate, careful examination of the grease has failed to reveal the capture of a single one, a point upon which my experience is confirmed by that of a neighbour in this village who has some acres of young orcharding. Secondly, I observe that, after the recent rains, possibly because we put it on too thickly, a great deal of the grease has run down from the paper on to the bark below, which I fear that it may injure. Still, as I have said, it might have been better on the whole to leave the bands, as I fancy that the moth often ascends the trees as late as February—that is, if there is any moth. I should add that the grease is almost covered with the remains of a small black insect, though whether or no this is injurious to Apples is more than I can say.

Up to the present the worst pest with which we have to contend is American blight, and, in the case of Pears and Plums, the tom-tits and bullfinches—"blood-oafs" we call the latter here—which pick out the buds. So destructive are they, indeed, that I would not plant any more plums in this wooded country. I have, however, found that syringing with London Purple, if done frequently enough, seems to make the buds distasteful to birds.

Some years ago, after eating an excellent American fruit of that variety, I planted a standard New-Town pippin tree as an experiment, Last year it bore some Apples, one of which Mason and I have been sampling. Certainly it is not so good as the imported variety, being rather sharp to the taste and of no remarkable flavour. Perhaps, however, it will improve as the tree ages, or after longer keeping, or the sort may not be quite true to name.[1] While I was eating it I observed that the Stable garden, and especially that part of it which is planted with young Strawberries, was pitted with deep holes, and to my indignation, discovered that all the gates having been carelessly left open, or perhaps blown open, during the preceding night, two of the farm horses, when let out from the neighbouring buildings to water, had managed to rush into this garden. It is lucky that the damage is not greater.

On the 12th the frost set in, of which we took advantage to finish the mulching of the young Apples with manure, also to barrow away the rank mud mixed with leaves from the drain ditch and lay it round the roots of the standard trees, where, I imagine, it will prove an excellent stimulant. Further, we have been spreading litter on both the Rose beds and mounding the Artichokes with ashes, in either case to protect the roots from frost. It is curious to observe how the silvery leaves of these Artichokes wither and fall beneath the influence of cold, till one might think that they were quite dead. This, however, is not so—that is, if the weather does not remain severe for too long—since after a few mild days they lift themselves up again and seem but little the worse. Like the African market, they have been but "temporarily depressed."

Also, while the frost lasted, we were busy enough digging the old soil from the front part of the interior of the Fig house, where the Tomatoes are planted, to be wheeled away and used for the refreshment of the bed of hardy things beneath the Elm trees, which is so much sucked by their roots. We are replacing this soil to the depth of about eighteen inches with well-rotted turf, laid up a year ago for the purpose, and a little manure, in which this year's Tomato crop will be planted in due course; indeed, the seeds are already up in one of the warm frames. Meanwhile, by means of some movable stands and stages, now that the Chrysanthemums are out of it, we are converting the Fig house into a Winter greenhouse, for use and not for ornament, moving into it a number of things out of the warm pits, such as pans of Auricula seedlings, Arum-lilies, Geranium cuttings, &c.

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[1] This New-Town pippin has done splendidly in the season of 1904, bearing some very fine fruit.—H. R. H.

In this house lives a tortoise named Capernaum, which I captured some years ago amidst the ruins of that place in the Holy Land. During the winter (for Capernaum positively loathes our climate) he buries himself against the bricks which support the pipes, having found by experience that they are conductors of heat. Now the door, which must stand open during all this barrowing, of course lets in the cold, and I was amused to observe Capernaum arise from his winter grave and trek off towards the other end of the house in a manner which, although sleepy, was quite definite. A few hours later I found him buried again against another set of bricks, as much out of the draught of the open door as possible. A study of Capernaum's habits has convinced me that tortoises are by no means such fools as they look.

The cuttings, &c., having been removed from the hot pit, the manure, with which the warmth from the pipes that run round it is supplemented when the Cucumbers are planted each spring, has been dug out of them and barrowed on to the land, where, as it is now thoroughly rotted down, it should do much good. This done, the pit itself has been whitewashed to kill insects, and is now left to air until the time comes to fill it with fresh manure.

At the height of the frost I was obliged to go to Kessingland to attend an important meeting of the school-managers in connection with the new Act. On the day after my arrival, not only was it freezing hard, but a bitter north-easterly gale was blowing, which no amount of clothing seemed able to keep out. Kessingland under such circumstances is, I think, the coldest place that I know—Florence in January excepted. The warmest spot that I could find there, not excluding the house, was the beach, where the wind, even when blowing straight on to it, cuts less than it does upon the top of cliffs above. Thither I went then to examine the progress of my Marum plants (Psamma Arenaria).

I think that the planting of this sea-grass is likely to prove the most useful bit of gardening that ever I did, and, for the benefit of others who may own similar property, I will say a few words about it. Six or seven years ago, charmed by the situation of the rambling old house, which is, I think, about the most easterly dwelling in England, greatly daring, I acquired this place that has an ocean frontage of two hundred and fifty yards. Immediately afterwards arose the fearful November gale of 1897, which washed the cliffs beyond me, and, from the continual striking of the spray, even did some damage to my own, above the level of the sea-wall. As no more serious hurt happened in the worst tempest and highest tide that had been known for a hundred years, it set me thinking that, if only I could create a bank of sand, sloping from the foot of the cliffs, up which the waves, even of a great tide, would find it difficult to roll, and at the same time protect the tops of those cliffs, by sloping them and diverting the surface drainage, which is one of the principal causes of their erosion all along the eastern coast, I might, in the absence of some total change of the local sea conditions as regards currents and sandbanks, make my property practically safe for generations. Now, to do this, in my experience—as, indeed has been shown at Lowestoft and Pakefield—sea-walls are as useless as they are expensive, for no wall can resist the constantly renewed attacks of the ocean. Sand alone has this power if it can be gathered in sufficient quantity, at a sufficient angle, and kept in place when gathered.

Now, I observed that wherever a tuft of Marum grass grew along the coast, a little heap of sand was collected to windward of it after a gale. Therefore, abandoning the idea of continuing the sea-wall that my predecessor had built at great cost immediately in front of the house —he spent £500 on it, I believe—having first sloped the cliffs, a laborious job that cost me ten or a dozen yards of land at the top of them, but one which was in all other ways most satisfactory, I set to work to sow Marum at their foot and to plant tufts of it down to the level of the ordinary high tides.

The results five years later are as follows: My beach has risen about twelve feet in height, the Marum in places having been buried so deeply that it was necessary to replant. In all the high tides that we have had not a single clump has as yet been washed away, that is to say, the extreme limit of the sea seems to have been pushed back more than twenty yards. The sand where the Marum plants are oldest—some of them are now three feet through—has become almost as hard as rock, and I notice that no gale seems to disturb it. My belief, therefore, is that, if we can pass another three years without damage, by which time the Marum ought to become a thorough mat, in the absence, of course, of some striking change of existing conditions, the gales and tides that can do us any hurt must indeed be terrific.[1]

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[1] Even the awful tide of the end of November 1903, which has worked such desolation at Lowestoft and elsewhere, did no more than wash the outer rows of my Marum without harming them at all.—H. R. H.

Of course, however—*absit omen*—that change *may* occur, and then nothing can resist the scour of the sea. On the other hand, our beach, of which at low water, there is now often 150 yards, and sometimes much more, continually augmented as it is by the stuff brought from Lowestoft and Pakefield, three or four miles away, may go on widening until it becomes absolutely safe. Meanwhile the Marum has undoubtedly done yeoman service, and is seeding itself all about—not only on my property, but far beyond its borders. This plant, however, grows slowly from seed, seeming to take about three years before it makes much show. From the suckers which spring from its running roots that appear to pierce the sand to a depth of twelve or fourteen feet, it increases much more rapidly, especially at the foot of the cliffs, where that sand is mixed with clay. In the salt blown sand it does not do so well.

I have made various experiments at Kessingland in the way of planting hardy Poplars, &c.; but unless the young trees are directly protected by the house or a wall, I have found only two things which can withstand the salt-laden breath of our easterly spring gales—namely, the Privet, in comparatively sheltered situations, and the Tamarisk. The young leaves of everything else turn black and die, with the result that the wood dies with them. Perhaps I should except Sea Buckthorn also; at least, I observe that out of over two hundred little shrubs that I planted on the cliff face three years ago many seem to be getting a hold. Also I have sown a quantity of Gorse seed, but of this only two or three plants have survived, although it came up thickly enough.

Now I discover further that, if thrust into the sand where it is mixed with clay about November and left, a fair proportion of Tamarisk cuttings will root there; at least, some that I set last autumn twelve-months did so, therefore, I have just repeated the experiment on a larger scale. Rosa Rugosa will also thrive quite near the sea.

Large and lovely bushes of it, amongst many other things, may be seen in Mr. Russell Colman's beautiful gardens at Corton on the far side of Lowestoft.

To return to Ditchingham. Since the frost broke we have for the most part been engaged on various rough jobs about the garden, untidy enough to look at now, but which will, I trust, reward us in the coming months and years. Thus, the draining of the lawn-tennis court is finished—that is, so far as the digging of the trenches, the laying of the pipes and the covering of them over with cinder rubble are concerned. The ground, however, is so soft that we cannot wheel away the clay dug out of the drains or bring other material with which to fill them up at present. For these operations we must wait until a frost, when the turf will not cut up, or, at any rate, for drier weather. The ground proved to be surprisingly wet, and when dug literally bled out water into the new trenches. Indeed, I have had to add two more drains, set "mocking," or slantwise, from both top corners, which seem to hold more water than any other part.

Another piece of drainage that I have commenced is that of a deep drain running beneath and between the Asparagus beds, of which there are five in the Old garden. Two of these are very ancient, but the other three I have made or re-made of late years. Still, even these new beds do not bear to my satisfaction, and I am convinced the reason is that stagnant water stands about their roots. Whether I am right or not the laying of this drain ought to prove. Also, I am taking a branch through the doorway of the Fig house wall up to the top corner of the New garden Rose-bed, where a great deal of water stands about within a few inches of the surface of the soil.

The fact is that when I made this Rose-bed ten or a dozen years ago, the job was not properly done. It is all very well to say that Roses like clay: so they do, but I think that they also like drainage. It is not sufficient to dig out the top soil, replace it with a suitable mixture, and plant. There should be a layer of rubble between the compost and the blue clay, into which superfluous moisture can settle.

Indeed, I think that I have proved this. Many years ago I made a Rose-bed in the old Flower garden, where a long border of evergreens used to stand, but, like that in the Kitchen garden, without drainage. Some seasons since I noticed that the Roses were not doing well; so in the autumn of 1900 I took them all up, dug out the soil to a depth of about two and a half feet, of which I only saved the top six or eight inches, put in half a foot of rubble drainage, and replanted the old bushes with some fresh ones in a new and carefully prepared mixture, all of them, I think, on their own roots. They took a year to recover this treatment, but although it was so wet and sunless last season, produced a splendid show of bloom, while the bushes now look very strong and thriving.

I do not believe in throwing away old Roses, unless they wear out completely, which under suitable conditions they seldom seem to do when upon their own roots. It is all very well to keep on planting the latest novelties, but some of these prove very delicate, also they take time to grow into specimens. But, then, I like a great show of Roses in their season—not a few blooms only, however perfect.

At one time we thought of treating the New kitchen-garden Rose-border in the same fashion, namely, by entirely re-making the bed, but they did so much better last year than previously, that we have come to the conclusion that, with suitable top-dressings and the drain of which I have spoken, this will not be necessary.

Another job that we have in hand is connected with the enlargement of the Old kitchen garden pond of which I have spoken. Of late years, although our case is nothing like so bad as are those of Essex, Hertfordshire, and some other counties, we have suffered much in

Norfolk from lack of rainfall. Thus, although this house has considerable soft-water tanks, one of which holds six thousand gallons, after a few days' pumping they continually go dry. Now, our well water is hard, and, therefore, not pleasant for washing purposes. This well used to be pumped by means of a pony, which has now been supplanted by a little oil-engine. It occurred to me that when the pond is finished there will be a large body of excellent soft water available, so we are connecting the soft-water pump that is worked by the engine with this pond about fifty yards away.

This is done by means of a two-inch galvanised pipe, through which the engine will draw the water by suction to the pump that delivers it at the top of the house. The business, however, is one that requires careful management, since, if any air is allowed to get into the pipe, it will refuse to suck. Also a proper filter bed, surrounded by brickwork, must be set in the pond to prevent dirt and leaves from being drawn into the pipe. As the pit has now been pumped dry, in order to allow of its enlargement, we have also to take advantage of the opportunity to "fye," or clean out, the old portion and to build the filter bed. These things, then, we are doing as fast as we can.

My well here has never shown signs of giving out, but I am alarmed at what has happened to sundry of my neighbours on the Suffolk side of the Waveney Valley, where springs that have flowed copiously for unknown time have suddenly dwindled into nothing, putting their owners to great expense to find other water, if, indeed, it can be found in every case. Therefore, I am anxious to connect up with the pond in order that I may spare the well.

I have spent a few shillings at one of Messrs. Protheroe's sales upon some new varieties of Iris flowers that I think very beautiful—I mean new to me. They are called Iris Aurea, Prince of Orange, and Unique.

These I have planted in the pond bulb-border, the Aureas, which are said to throw up bloom-stems three feet high, in two clumps, one on either side of the gate; and the Prince of Orange and the Unique in two more clumps, balancing each other at the end. I think that in this new-made, sloping border they ought to thrive and look handsome in coming seasons.

There are a few new things out in the houses. Thus, on January 25th, in the Cold orchid house a Masdevallia is in flower. It is called Mas: Swerticifolius; at least, that is the label which has always been in the pot, though I cannot find the name in my Orchid books. It is a tiny bloom, not larger than the top of a slate pencil, but how extraordinarily beautiful, with its little ox-like horns and spotted purple hue as it bends upon the wiry stem, that is thinner than a thread. Looked at through a glass nothing could be more perfect. I think there is something to be said against the tendency which exists nowadays, especially in connection with gardening, to glorify mere size. The small things are often the loveliest, to those who will take the trouble to examine them; or, rather, all are lovely, for whatever the scale, nature still works with an equal hand. Why should we always, then, be trying to make big that which nature intended to be small?

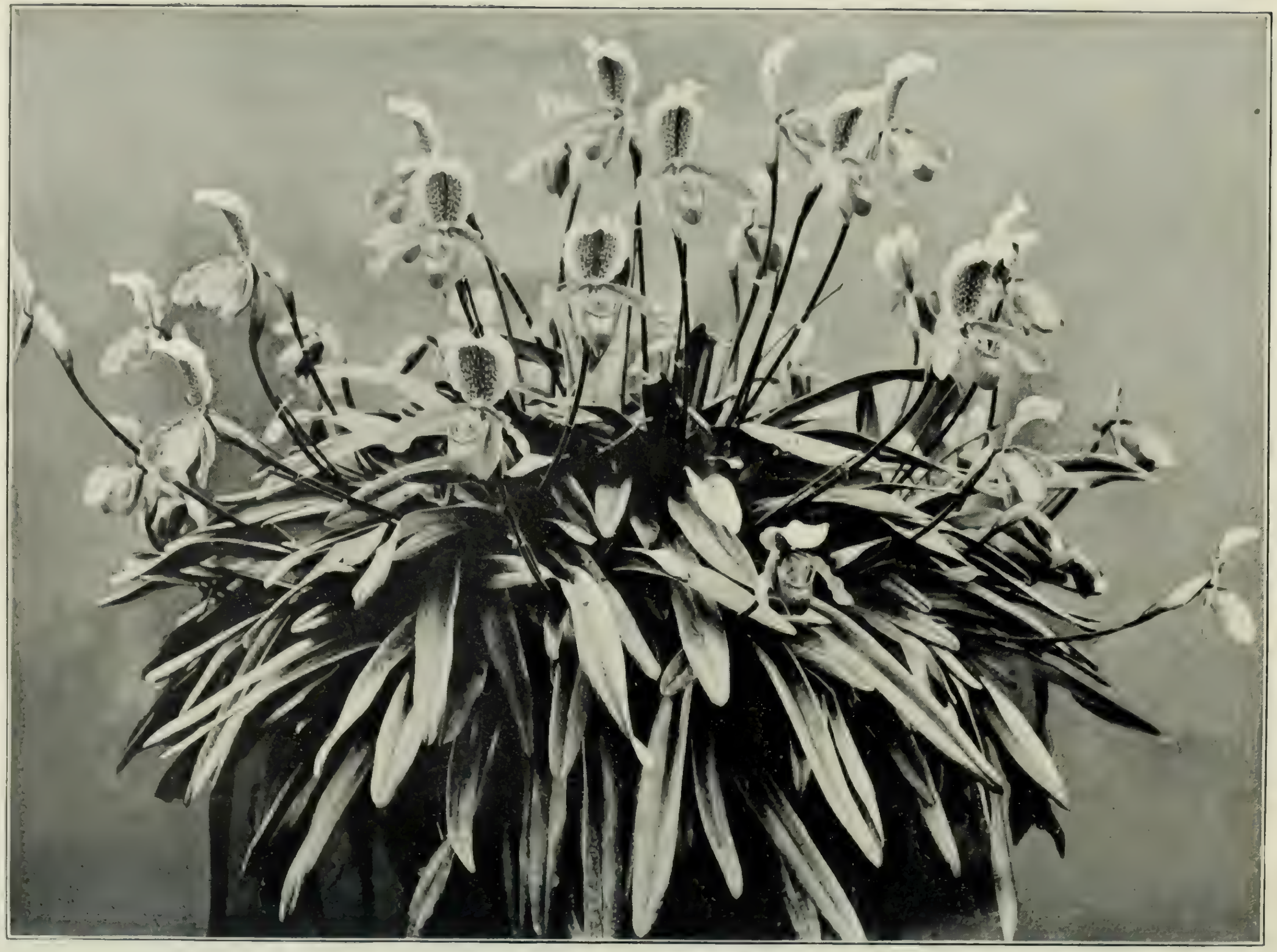
In the Cold greenhouse some of the potted-up Daffodils are coming into flower, and what can be more welcome than the sight of their golden hoops? Next door, also, a bulb of Pandanus Fragrans has opened its dazzling, but somewhat overpowering blooms. I gave away its parent years ago, when I ceased to keep a stovehouse, but afterwards begged some off-shoots back to try them in a lower temperature. They are succeeding very well, although this house sometimes goes down to 50 degrees, but I do not think that they grow quite so fast as they did in heat.

The Intermediate house is now very empty of bloom, but in the Cool orchid house more Cypripediums have come into flower, among them the varnished-looking C. Villosum and its child, the old-gold hued C. Lathamianum, with its white dorsal sepal, which it gets from the mother (or is it the father ?) C. Spicerianum. This is, I think, one of the most beautiful of the Cypripediums, and I am glad to say that of it I have now grown up some fair-sized specimens. In the Hot orchid house another bud of Angræcum Sesquipedale has gone wrong. As in the first instance, I suspected thrip, but on opening the bud I find that some deadly maggot seems to have been at work in the heart of it, at least it has that appearance. I wonder if it can be the Cattleya fly which has done this evil deed ? Not long ago I found some grubs of it in the new growths of the Catt. Mossiæ imported from Venezuela.

I have been much amused in this house watching the behaviour of a plant of Cyp. Victoria Maria. Of this a single flower stem has been bearing its pinkish-green blooms for nearly two years, a new one appearing when the old falls off. As may be imagined, this stem is now very long, and it is interesting to see how it has bent itself into a perfect hoop in order to get nearer to the glass, giving it a curious resemblance to the head of a thin-necked horse looking round in its stall. Evidently, like Goethe (I think), it seeks "more light," and a human being could not set about finding it with greater intelligence.

Well, we may talk of Orchids, but what can be more beautiful than the sights that meet us in our English fields even in the dull heart of winter ? Walking round the farm to-day I chanced to look up, and saw in the fence at my side the stem of an oak tree, and embracing it a plant of common ivy, the sunlight shining on its purpled-veined, deep green leaves, most of them curved inward at the edges, perhaps owing to the action of the recent frost. I know not why, but the appearance of that grey, ridged oak bark and of the glossy ivy which clung to it struck me as singularly perfect.

I do not think that there is anything more to record at present, except that on the 17th we consumed our first Rhubarb, which has been gently forced in the Mushroom house. It was very good indeed. Rhubarb is one of the few vegetables that, in my opinion, are really improved by forcing.



CYPRIPEDIUM INSIGNE (*Bloomed at* DITCHINGHAM)

FEBRUARY

I TAKE up my pen again at the end of the first week of February. Certainly the weather is wonderfully mild and open. Also, it is strangely dry, alarmingly so, indeed, for I do not think that I can ever remember seeing the ponds and ditches so empty at this time of year. Up to the present "February fill-dyke" has belied its name, but, by way of compensation, we have had sunshine, and of gales more than enough.

During the last day or two of January we finished re-potting the Masdevallias in our private mixture of leaf-mould, peat, moss, and powdered oyster-shells. Also, we began re-potting the Ferns in the common peat which we get from the Heath here. By the way, one of the drawbacks to Orchid-growing is the ever-increasing expense of the best peat, which now sometimes costs as much as 9s. a sack. Whether this is owing to the action of a ring or to a scarcity of the material I do not know, but the result is that, so far as I am concerned, I use very little of it, being content to make out with substitutes. I should add that for these Ferns we mix one part of fibrous loam to two parts of peat, adding a good dash of coarse silver sand.

The enlarging of the garden-pond being now finished—it has proved a tedious and somewhat costly job—we have been making good all doubtful places in the banks by "puddling" them with stiff clay. In the old pond whenever the water rose above a certain level, it escaped, and now I hope that I have found the reason[1] in a tiny vein of sand which appears between a patch of chalk marl and the clay. This I am picking out and stopping.

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[1] Alas! on further excavation, the real reason has proved to be a large and curious pocket of chalk and sand veins, of which the presence has now

On the 30th and the 31st we made a sowing of William I. Peas on the Old garden border, pruned the young Belgian Apple trees, put Chicory and Endive into the Mushroom house to blanch, made sowings of Mustard and Cress and Broad-beans; moved the Beet and Potatoes from their clamps, where they were getting very wet, burying the former in cinder ashes, and placing the latter in the store-room; cleaned the Shrubbery, rolled the drives, &c.

I think it was on Feb. 2 that we planted a patch of Shallots in the Orchard, setting them in lines twelve inches apart, with about eight inches between the dry bulbs. In my opinion, Shallots make the best pickle in the world, and ought to be more largely used than they are. Also, we spawned another Mushroom-bed.

On Tuesday, the 3rd, we were digging vacant land, and having lifted the Parsnips, laid them in to keep, being careful to place their crowns downwards to prevent them from growing. On the 4th our most interesting piece of work was the re-potting of the Amaryllis bulbs, of which there are about three dozen, that, as I have explained, I grow, not altogether unsuccessfully, in the little heat at my disposal.

These bulbs, which have been standing on a top shelf in the Cold greenhouse all the winter, are taken out of their pots and thoroughly washed with X L insecticide. If this is not done, my experience is that thrip and mealy bug are very apt to make a home deep down between the springing leaves, which they cripple and disfigure. After washing they are re-potted in a mixture of fibrous loam, leaf-mould, with a little dry cow-dung and silver sand, and stood in one of the Cucumber pits to start them.

necessitated the cementing of one side of the pond. Whether this partial cementing will prove an effectual cure I cannot say as yet, but heartily do I trust so who am weary of these laborious and costly diggings and repairs.—H. R. H., Sept. 1904.

Also, we have moved from the Old garden into the Orchard about three dozen little Gooseberry bushes reared by ourselves from cuttings during the last few years. As this place swarms with birds, however, and it will be impracticable to net between the Apple trees, there is little hope of gathering ripe fruit from them. Still, they will be useful to produce green Gooseberries for tarts or bottling.

I find that we have delayed moving these bushes quite long enough, as they are already starting into life. So, by the way, are the little Pears on the Quince stocks, or some of them, in my opinion sooner than they ought to do, since we must have much cold weather ahead. On these the fruit-buds, which seem to be plentiful, are swelling large and white. More, the bullfinches or tomtits have found it out, for a few of them are damaged by their destructive beaks. As soon as there comes a damp and suitable day they must be dusted with soot and lime, a mixture that is very distasteful to birds, I suppose because it burns their throats.

We have made a discovery as regards the Caustic wash, of which I have already written—namely, that if kept it seems to lose its virtue. In order to save trouble we mixed enough to do all the trees, but when the greater part had been syringed, the weather turned too wet and blustering to allow of the job being finished. A week or so afterwards, when it was again favourable, this, however, was done with the remainder of the prepared wash, which had been kept in a tub. Now we observe that the trees treated on this second occasion have not been cleared of their green mould; indeed, the syringing seems to have had little or no effect upon them. They must therefore, be dosed again, and as soon as possible, since the buds are beginning to swell, and I fear lest this searching wash should injure them if they are too forward.

In speaking of pruning the young Apple trees I should have added that we cut back the twelve Bramley Seedlings, which are six-year-old bushes, very severely. The reason of this is that they have but little fibrous root, and if left with too much top, I fear that it would prove insufficient for their support. Gardeners often make the mistake of leaving too large a head upon newly transplanted bushes of all sorts, and though sometimes it seems a pity to apply the knife, and thereby injure their appearance, I am sure that, in the long run, it is best to do so.

On the 5th we potted off a number of seedling Tomatoes with leaf-mould, loam, and sand, giving a few of them a good sprinkling of burnt earth by way of an experiment. This burnt earth is the product of stiff clay, ploughed up with all the rubbish on it from the strip of Orchard next the drain-ditch, which is to be used for a cart-road. To burn it properly is a matter of no little skill. As soon as the clods are sufficiently dry they should be packed into large conical heaps, in which are placed layers of straw and any old wood that may be available. The heap is then fired and the clay beaten down firmly all over it, more and more being added from time to time.

If everything goes well, such heaps will burn for a fortnight or over, and when opened be full of bright red earth like crumbled bricks, which is very useful for many purposes in a garden, and, indeed, acts as a manure. Also, if it can be spared, it is good for making paths. If the soil is too wet, or continuous rain comes, especially in windless weather, the heaps, however, are apt to go out, when they must be relaid.

Last autumn I thought that I would be very clever, and instruct the rustic mind how to burn clay more expeditiously. Obviously, I reflected, what was wanted is more oxygen, which I set to work to supply in the following fashion. Fetching four bricks, I stood on them a large six-inch drain-pipe, and laid from it other little drain-pipes to the edge of the circumference of the heap. This I proceeded to build up in the usual manner, explaining to my incredulous myrmidons that it would burn with marked rapidity and success. So it did while the wood and straw lasted, after which it went out once and for all. Indeed, on the following morning I found that old Freaks had cast aside my central chimney and conducting air passages, and was rebuilding the heap as he had been accustomed to do for the last sixty years.

"You don't want to let no air in; you wants to keep it out," he said.

So pride had a fall. The curious thing is, however, that soil is evidently itself inflammable. Why, then, does not the whole earth take fire from the glowing heart within? Perhaps, after all, our globe is nothing but a garden heap on a large scale, through which the flame is ever eating outwards. If so, when it gets to the surface the end will come as prophesied, and without the assistance of any colliding stars or comets.

On this day also we dug manure into a piece of the Orchard land which has been prepared for the sowing of spring Onions, and dressed all the soil there that is not under crop with two parts of basic slag mixed with one part of kanite, applied in the proportion of about five hundredweight to the acre, Dissolved bones we shall give it later as it comes on for crop. I am a great believer in basic slag for these heavy soils. Further, we sowed some Onions of the variety called Banbury, in boxes to be started in a frame, as the plants forced on thus form a hard skin before what we know here as the Onion-fly appears, and are therefore less liable to injury from this pest. Also we sowed some Telegraph Cucumber seed and some Sweet-peas out of doors, of which I think we already have a few planted in pots, about three to a pot, to be transferred to the open ground in due season.

On the 6th our chief job was wheeling the rich soil, of which I have spoken as being removed from the Fig house, to the Elm-tree flower-border and rockery, that first had been thoroughly cleaned of weeds and rubbish, over which we scattered it with shovels. It seems to bury up the plants somewhat, especially such things as Saxifrages, one or two of which, by the way, are knotting for flower, but I have no doubt that the first rain which comes will put this right.

On the 7th, which was very mild, but rather dull, with a little rain, we made a sowing of Gradus Peas in the Orchard, digging out trenches two spits deep, of which the bottoms were filled with manure, to receive them. As this was precisely the weather for our purpose, we dusted the soot and lime over the Pear trees and Gooseberry bushes by means of a mustard tin—an even better instrument is a straw bottle-cover. To these in this damp it clings in a whity-brown coat, which will, I trust, burn the throats of any birds that try to eat the buds. Further, the ground being in admirable condition and thoroughly prepared, we planted out a large bed with August-sown white Spanish Onions, being careful to injure the roots as little as possible in the process. We have set these, allowing ten inches between the rows and six inches from bulb to bulb.

Two years ago I purchased a few plants of the new Logan-berry, which is the result of a cross between the Raspberry and the Blackberry, also one or two Canadian Blackberries and Japanese Wine and Honey-berries. Last year the Logan-berries bore a little, the fruit, if gathered quite ripe, being to my fancy, much superior both in size and flavour to that of either of its parents. So I determined to increase them, and as they are or were expensive to buy, pegged down some of the branches of the two bushes that had survived. As a result, I find that I possess five or six rooted plants, which we have taken up and set afresh in prepared soil hard by in order to make a little plantation of them. This I hope to increase as time goes on, since they are a decided addition to our edible fruits. Also I have pegged down more branches to root during the coming summer.

The Wine-berry and Honey-berry are exceedingly handsome, and the latter, with me, is a very vigorous grower. Neither of these fruits, however, has much flavour; or, at least, they had not last year, perhaps owing to the lack of sun, although they are both abundant bearers. The Canadian Blackberries were a failure; indeed, only one plant has survived out of the three that I bought. I remember that in past years I have tried different sorts of these foreign Blackberries in various soils and positions, but always without success. I do not think that the Norfolk climate agrees with them.

The signs of spring are becoming very pronounced. On the Vineyard Hills, not far from this house, which have a south-westerly aspect and are very sheltered, a whole bunch of Primroses has been gathered, and I see a plant of this lovely flower in full bloom upon the margin of my Pond garden. Violets, too, are beginning to flower in the open air, as well as in frames, where they have done very well this year, perhaps because we placed them nearer to the glass; and some corms of Crocus Siberica have expanded their purple petals in the Elm-tree bed, while the Wallflower is opening freely against the Cool orchid house. Snowdrops, too, are quite a show, the clumps being covered with single and double bloom, and the shoots upon the Honeysuckle and Banksia Roses are long and green, while Daffodils are pushing up their green leaves, promising good things to come.

Meanwhile, a few pots of the Golden Spur variety of Narcissus, which I grew in the greenhouse, have burst into full bloom. One of them, with twelve flowers or more, stands before me at this moment, and is a truly beauteous sight. Evidently this sort does exceedingly well in pots, and should be more largely used for that purpose. The Hyacinths, also, are beginning to flower—of course, under glass—and how sweet they are! One of a perfect white stands in the drawing-room and makes the whole place fragrant. It is single, as I prefer this tribe, which is more graceful than the double. On the other hand, the first batch of odorous Freesias, which have done very fairly, is now going over. This is not a long-lived flower, but useful in its season.

Most welcome of all the signs that Earth has awoke again is, however, the singing of the birds. All over the wide Bungay Common sound the piercing notes of the lark, while from every tree comes the song of the throstle and the blackbird. How pleasant they are to hear after this long space of winter silence! Also I see these same thrushes earnestly engaged amongst the roots of the hedges, and the sparrows fighting over their mates beneath the Cabbage leaves, while starlings are busy investigating unused chimney-pots and loose mortar under the tiles. Clearly, the thoughts of all them are turned towards nests and matrimony. But Candlemas day was very bright and clear, and, doubtless, there is still much winter before us. I fear that the poor birds may have a bitter awakening from their pleasant dreams, and I wish devoutly that the Pear buds were not so forward.

Another week has gone by, the weather on February 16th remaining of the same extraordinary mild and rainless character. Indeed, gardeners about here say that they can remember no such season, and that the fruit trees are fuller of sap than they have ever seen them at this time of year. On my own Pear trees some of the buds are ready to burst, and in a neighbour's garden the Pyrus Japonica has been in full bloom for several days. On the Rose-border the bushes are coming into leaf; in fact, everything is far ahead of its time, notwithstanding a welcome white frost last night. All this is of very evil omen. Indeed, unless the weather changes within a week or so, I fear we shall have but a poor fruit year, as many of the buds will expand before their season, only to be nipped by the bitter wind—frosts, and easterly gales which we are sure to experience before winter really turns its back upon us. Beyond an occasional drizzle there has been no rain so that the outlook in this respect is becoming serious.

On the 9th I found the first yellow Crocus in bloom, and since then it has been succeeded by others of the purple kind, which I planted two or three years ago in the turf edgings that border the carriage drive. When these are fully out they look very pretty among the green grass, but the sparrows are great enemies to them, picking off their heads by dozens. I imagine they do this from pure mischief, as I do not think that sparrows care for the little black insects which are often to be found within their cups and those of Primroses. On that day also we made a sowing of Onions in the Orchard, taking care to tread the ground well before and after seeding. Also we sowed early Horn Carrots, Marrowfat Peas, Mustard and Cress for succession, and some Brussels Sprouts, early London Cauliflower, and a little early white Celery in boxes. Other jobs were top-dressing a Lily-of-the-valley bed, and moving the Amaryllis bulbs, which we had potted up into a warm pit.

On the 10th we took a number of cuttings from plants of the beautiful scarlet Salvia Splendens, which have been standing in the Cold greenhouse, set them in pans, and placed them in a hot pit, together with other cuttings of Fuchsias of the outdoor and greenhouse varieties.

Further, we lifted some of the paving pammets at either end of the Cold greenhouse, dug out the soil to a depth of about two feet, and, having put in a thick drainage bed of broken bricks, replaced it with a mixture of burnt earth, mortar rubble, decayed manure, and peat, and set therein the two plants of Lapageria Alba, of which I have spoken—of course, after turning them out of their pots. I hope that they will do well here, and in time climb all about the roof of the greenhouse, but in the case of Lapagerias so much seems to depend upon how the plants start away when young. I think that mine are about three years old, and one of them seems much more vigorous than the other. There is nothing more beautiful when they succeed. I remember, years ago, seeing a greenhouse, from the top of which hung many hundreds of the bright bells of the red variety, and never shall I forget how lovely they looked.

Also we treated a plant of Passiflora, commonly known as Passion flower, in a similar way. Hitherto it has lived in a pot, which it seemed to be outgrowing. Round the sides of these prepared beds I directed the bricklayer to set an edging of tiles and cement, raised about three inches above the floor, in order to prevent the water with which the greenhouse is washed out from settling in the beds and making them sodden. Talking of edgings, reminds me that Freaks has been engaged in lifting and replacing some lengths of ornamental tiles that I set in the Kitchen garden years ago; also in filling up the gaps in those of Box. This question of edgings is always rather difficult. Where Box, which is prettiest, is used, it requires constant trimming, and is always liable to die in patches, leaving ugly gaps, whereas the tiles look somewhat artificial, become irregular in time, and often flake in frost.

On this day, too, we cleaned and re-arranged the Cold greenhouse, moving into it, from one of the pits, some Cinerarias, which look very healthy and are just coming into bloom. Also we made sowings of Chelsea Gem and English Wonder Peas in a warm border, and dragged up by hand the hundreds of offshoots which spring from the roots of the row of Filbert bushes at the end of the Stable garden. These suckers are very troublesome, as they are great robbers of the soil, and even pass beneath the broad gravel path beyond the border into the beds at its farther side, which they impoverish. I think, indeed, that Filberts should be grown in a place apart, as most of mine are, with the exception of this line, which I set here to serve as a wind-break.

On the 11th we began digging up the Stable garden herbaceous border, moving some of the coarser perennials, such as the larger-flowered Michaelmas Daisies, and being very careful not to injure the other roots and bulbs. As this border is somewhat wet and heavy, we wheeled on to it a good quantity of burnt earth, which was forked into the top soil. Also we gave it a dressing of horticultural Chemical manure, of the manufacture of which a gentleman, who manages a large malting in the neighbourhood, makes a speciality. He sells it to me at a very moderate price, though I am informed that it is practically the same stuff which is often advertised at a shilling a tin. Certainly, its effect upon flowers is very good indeed.

I fear that some mild artifice is practised in trades connected with horticulture. Thus I have heard, on good authority, that many of the seeds advertised as "So and So's so and so" are, in reality, grown in bulk in New Zealand. Also I believe that, although they do not appear in the transaction, there are wholesale growers in England who supply different firms with the same seed, which each of them christens with its own name. However this may be, there is no doubt that horticulture owes a debt to these enterprising firms, since the competition between them has resulted in the production of a very high class of goods.

Still, it does seem strange to me that so many people are willing to pay such large prices for what, by taking a little trouble, they can obtain much cheaper elsewhere. Thus, within the last few days, I have received sundry catalogues of Orchids, priced at sums that I should have thought prohibitive to any except the very rich. Yet many of these plants can be bought quite cheaply if the purchaser knows how to go about it, though while folk are to be found who are prepared to give such fancy values I do not know that sellers can be blamed for asking them.

This day, also, we sprayed the Orchid houses with the invaluable X L mixture, which I find equally effective and less expensive than the fumigation, also with an X L preparation, that I used to practise; and the Peach and Fig trees with Gishurst's Compound, using two ounces to a gallon of water. Lastly, we sowed more Broad-beans.

On the 12th, a lovely and calm spring day, we continued digging and arranging the herbaceous border, collected manure for the Cucumber frames, potted up perennial Primulas, swept and rolled the lawns, and carted the flints that had been dug out of the pond clay, of which flints we propose to make use in an addition to the Rockery. These I only secured just in time, as, on going out for my ordinary walk before breakfast, I discovered a tumbril from the farm in the very act of removing them, in order that they might be used to fill in some cowhouse drain. That tumbril went empty away, although I must admit that the hour for the raid was artfully chosen, as Mason and his myrmidons were at their breakfasts.

We made up another Mushroom-bed, but I am sorry to say that the Mushrooms have been a sad disappointment this year, not because there is any fault to be found with the manure or spawn, but owing, I suppose, to the mildness of the season. My Mushroom house is, as I think I have said, next the boiler pit of which the chimney passes up within it. In order to keep out too much heat I cased this chimney with brick, leaving an air space between. In five years out of six this has proved sufficient to prevent the place from becoming too hot, but in the present spring, if I may talk of spring in mid-February, it has been heretofore impossible to keep the temperature in the house much below 70 deg., with the result that the little Mushrooms wither up, about 50 deg., or rather less, seeming to be the temperature which they like. I am becoming confirmed in my opinion that it would be better to move the Mushroom house to some place where it can receive no artificial heat at all.

We have re-dressed those Apple trees on which it took no effect previously with a fresh mixture of the Caustic wash. Indeed, Charles has been at the task all day, the copper container strapped to him, after the fashion of his sins on the back of Christian in old pictures of "The Pilgrim's Progress," and about his head a fine white gauze veil, as though he were a young lady going to be married. This he had donned in order to prevent the powerful wash from getting into his eyes, but when I saw him it was hanging gracefully over his shoulder, because, as he explained, " the mesh was that fine that he couldn't see nothin' through it." Afterwards he appeared in a black gauze of wider construction, having exchanged his bridal appearance for that of a Dominican monk, the gloves and rusty overcoat worn on these occasions adding to this general effect. However, the trees were satisfactorily sprayed, and now look quite bright and clean.

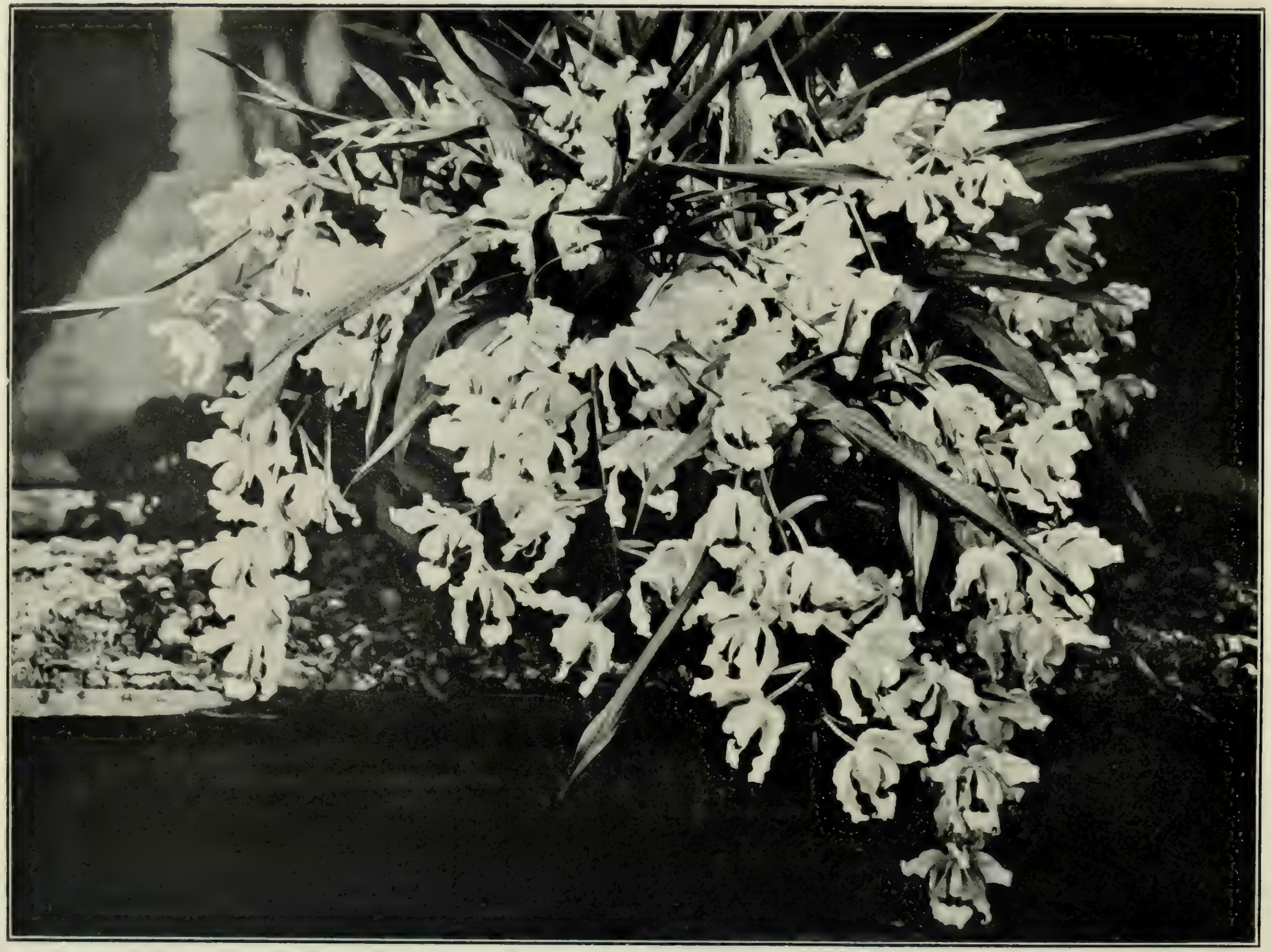
On the 13th we transplanted some Aquilegias and Silenes from where they grew to the bulb border round the Lawn pond, which will look rather bare when the Tulips and Daffodils are over. I forgot to say also that I broke up four or five large clumps of a white-flowered Saxifrage and set them all round this pond against the railings. I do not know the name of this Saxifrage, which was given to me by a friend who had great quantities. I can remember few things more beautiful in its way than the sight of it used as a wide edging, and absolutely covered with masses of delicate white bloom. I hope that in the future something similar will be on view round the pond railing; but, of course, to grow up such large clumps takes time, and this Saxifrage succeeds by its general effect. Before planting it I mixed a good deal of old mortar rubble into the soil.

More trenches were dug for Peas in the Orchard. As I think I said, we place the manure at the bottom of the trench, cover it in with soil, and then sow Peas a-top. This nitrogen-collecting crop is supposed not to care about coming into direct contact with manure, which, at the same time, it is glad of in its later stages, especially after the said manure has rotted down and ceased to be rank. Also we lifted some Chicory roots for forcing, and hoed and raked the gravel paths in the Kitchen garden.

On the 14th our flower seeds arrived, a list too long to quote—there are thirty-eight sorts in all. Some of these we sowed in pans of sifted leaf-mould and silver sand, among them Lobelia, Fuchsia, Aster, Carnation; Ricinus, or Castor-oil plant, which makes a very handsome foliage shrub; and Acacia Lophantha, a very neat thing for bedding-out use, and also as a greenhouse object. Freaks and Knowles turned the manure for the Cucumber-bed a second time, a necessary but odoriferous job, especially when the wind sets towards the house. It will require four or five such turnings in all before it becomes sweet and fit for use.

Further, we continued to dig the flower-borders and some vacant land for Brussels sprouts, and forked between the fruit bushes. In the Cool orchid house I found a Cypripedium going rotten at the root; indeed, one of the growths came away in my hand, the reason being that it had become sodden with the drip from a basket of Cœlogyne standing on the shelf above, a plant which at this time of year requires a considerable amount of water. This Cypripedium was re-potted last year in Belgian leaf-mould, which, so far as my present experience goes, must be treated with the utmost care as regards water, for if it receives too much, especially when the roots are not very active, the Orchids planted in it will certainly rot.

The Cœlogynes, by the way, are now, most of them, becoming very beautiful, except those which, as I mentioned, do not mean to flower this year. Indeed, some of the plants are quite covered with sprays of snowy bloom, the blotch of golden yellow on the lip throwing



CŒLOGYNE CRISTATA (*Bloomed at* DITCHINGHAM) up the whiteness of the sepals and petals in a wonderful fashion. I think this one of the loveliest and most satisfactory of all Orchids, but many gardeners seem to find it difficult to grow well, as their bloomless and shrivelled-bulbed specimens testify. Why this should be so I cannot imagine, unless it is because they keep them in too much heat and water them at the wrong seasons. Even professional growers have told me that they found C. Cristata difficult, which certainly has not been my experience, though when once it gets into thoroughly bad condition it is, I admit, hard to recover. My advice to any one who has a warm greenhouse is that he should cultivate half-a-dozen baskets of Cœlogyne, as it is cheap to buy, not liable to pests, and with the most ordinary care will multiply from year to year. That the results are worthy of the trouble I think any one would admit who could see my little collection of thirty or forty pans and baskets as they appear to-day.

The Cypripediums (I suppose that I should say Cypripedi*a*, but in this case and others I adopt the ordinary spelling of the Orchid trade) are also in full swing, since, although some of the earliest of the C. Insignes have gone off, others, such as C. Boxalli and C. Villosum, have come on. Altogether, the Cool orchid house makes a brave show just now, and we are quite proud of its appearance.

In the Intermediate house, also, there are a few things out, including a good many Lycastes Skinnerii, whose stiff and somewhat fleshy blooms everybody does not admire. Indeed, with the exception of the Anguloas, or Cradle-orchids, this is one of the coarsest-bloomed of the species. Then there are three or four plants of Dendrobium Wardianum Lowii, which is to my fancy perhaps the most brilliant and striking of all the Dendrobes, unless D. Falconeri, when well grown, can be excepted. Of one of these Wardianums I am rather proud, as I have had it for six or seven years, and it is still bearing thirty or forty flowers. I have been told that many people throw away these plants, as worn out and worthless, after the second or third year from importation. Doubtless, this specimen is not quite so good as it used to be, since, except under very favourable circumstances, the genus is one that deteriorates somewhat in cultivation; but it still grows very fairly, although the lack of sun last year has told upon it. Indeed, this is the case with many Orchids, not excepting the Cattleyas, which I do not think will bloom profusely this season, as, owing to the cold summer, the pseudobulbs they made are weak. Some of the Trianæs are beginning, however, and their flowers look lovely as ever, though, often enough, where there should be two or three there is only one to the spray.

Going on to the Warm greenhouse we find some fine heads of Imantophyllum, a gorgeous object when it succeeds, as it does this year, after the treatment which I have already described. I regret to say, however, that the Zululand plant of this species, whose vagaries as to colour I have spoken of, has come out as red as ever, although I hoped that after its cooking in the Peach house it might revert to its primeval yellow. The Anthuriums, too, are beginning to look bright, and there are a few other things.

In the Cold greenhouse the Hyacinths, blue and white, are really delightful to contemplate and smell; also there are some Cinerarias, Cyclamen, and Primulas, so that, altogether, this place is very pretty just now.

This past week—I write on February 23rd—has been of the same character as those that went before it—strangely mild and dry for the time of year, so dry, indeed, that the roads have been absolutely dusty. Still, in the early part of it there were two or three white frosts, for which we should be exceedingly thankful, as they have done something to keep things back.

I think that I mentioned in telling of the month of January that during my visit to Kent, while making my journey through rural England, I saw and took note of the local method of growing Filberts, not in a bush as we do, but on a single, short, tree-like stem, from which are led three or four main branches that carry the fruiting boughs, all suckers being rigorously suppressed. I am trying to imitate this system, and last year began by cutting away most of my bushes to a solitary lead, off which I sawed the head at about three feet from the ground. These during the summer threw out a profusion of shoots, which we have now thinned away to three or four, stopping in those that are left also, as is done with pyramid Apples. I observe that these shoots are already showing their tiny, but brilliant, scarlet bloom, while the male catkins from which they are fertilised are growing long and open. I wonder if any of my readers have ever noticed how much more intense in hue is the female bloom of the Filbert than that produced by the common Hazel, which is light pink in colour.

On the 16th and subsequent days we dug some trenches in the Orchard to receive early Celery in due course, laid a plentiful supply of good manure at the bottom of them (that is, about one foot from the surface), and covered it in. These trenches, which are four feet apart, will not be actually required until the end of May or so, but meanwhile the manure will be rotting, and the excavated earth, that ultimately is to be used for earthing up the Celery, can serve to support some quick-growing crop, such as Lettuces. Whereas if we left the digging of the trenches until they were actually needed to receive the Celery plants, of course, it would be too late to sow Lettuce, &c., on the soil thrown out of them.

The mice are so troublesome in the garden that, in sowing some Duke of York Peas the other day we thought it wise to roll them in red lead, whereof the taste is not appreciated by these little rodents. Also we dusted the surface of the lines with lime to keep away the slugs. This sticks to their slimy skins, and burns them when they arrive to eat the succulent seedlings. So many are the wiles that gardeners must practise to beat back their foes, although my experience is that a hungry slug laughs at lime, especially if there is Spinach to be had.

In many ways birds are a great trouble in a garden, but in others they are a still greater blessing, notably in this matter of slugs and snails. I have observed in Brittany, for instance, where they seem to shoot all the birds, that these pests are positively countless, and, indeed, go far towards making the growing of certain vegetables and flowers impossible. In my garden at Kessingland the case is somewhat similar, for here, right upon the sea, where trees are rare, there are comparatively few birds. Consequently, after rain, snails come up the cliff face in thousands; indeed, it is impossible to walk along the edge of the lawn-tennis courts in the twilight without stamping upon numbers of them, and one may throw them to the sands below till the arm aches and yet make no apparent impression on their hosts.

By the three Medlar trees in the Stable garden is a piece of land on which we find it difficult to grow much, as it is considerably overshadowed by a Beech that stands on the further side of the palings. Here, this year, we are making a Seakale plantation out of a quantity of root-cuttings or thongs which have been given to us by a neighbouring gardener. The land having been properly prepared, we set the cuttings in trenches two feet apart allowing about a foot between each of them, and covered over their crowns with soil. In order to show us where they are, and thus make hoeing practicable before they appear above the ground, we have marked the exact position of the trenches with lines of ashes.

Other things that we did on the first two or three days of the week were to turn the manure again for the Cucumber pits, to set some cuttings of Heliotrope and to sift soil for the sowing of annuals. Further, we looked over our seed Potatoes, and prepared a few Ash-leafs for planting on an early border, re-dusted the pyramid and other Pear trees with soot and lime, to which this time we added a little London Purple powder, and prepared our soil for the Cucumbers out of the heap of turf laid up for such purposes last year. Also we gave the lawn-tennis courts their annual dressing of basic slag, and the following day, when the white frost had made the turf a little hard, wheeled on to it twenty or thirty barrow loads of burnt waste which had first been passed through a fine sieve, and flung about it with a shovel.

This burnt stuff I consider a most valuable dressing for grass; also one that is very economical. All that the gardener need do is carefully to save the quantities of rubbish that accumulate, such as the prunings of trees, worn-out boxes and hampers, leaves and gritty sweepings, rejected Cabbage tops and stalks, old boots and sacks, weeds, &c., and setting them alight when they are fairly dry, keep the fire going for so long as he has material with which to feed the flame. Then, at the end of ten days or so, in place of the heterogeneous mass of decaying nastiness, behold one or two cartloads of clean, reddish ashes, changed by the alchemy of Nature into a useful and convenient manure.

For two days in the middle of the week all hands, excepting Knowles, who was engaged in wheeling the turf mould to the Cucumber-frame and shovelling it on to the top of the manure, were hard at work building our new Rockery, which I think ought really to prove a great success. First of all we cut a path through the middle of the little piece of land. Our method of making this and the other narrow paths in the Elm-tree garden is simple, but, where there is not much heavy wheeling to be done, fairly effective. Also it is cheap. We get some marl from a pit on the farm, and, since all our hard stuff is wanted for the |Orchard road and footways, lay it direct on to the clay bed. Then we bring sand from another pit and spread it thickly over the marl, to which it clings. A path thus formed will be found to answer all ordinary purposes, and if the sand is deep enough and the subsoil not too wet, it does not stick to the feet even in rain.

Having made our path and two or three steps down to it, we cleared away some scrubby Laurels, trenched the soil, and raised it two feet or more on either side by means of leaf-mould, which is barrowed from the heap made up last year. Then into this leaf-mould we set, as artistically as we could, various old tree stumps and boughs, to which we tied House-leek, &c., with wire. Now came in those flints which the farm-folk attempted to raid while everybody was at breakfast, the biggest of them being set about singly and the smaller ones used as an edging to hold up the soil.

So at last these flints, after waiting for thousands, or perhaps hundreds of thousands, of years beneath a great many feet of blue clay, have, so to speak, "arrived" and entered on a new and more engaging phase of their mission in the scheme of things, although, probably, by no means their last. It is another example of *tout vient à qui sait attendre.* Only observe the inequality of fate! The cart-load of their brethren which I detected in the very act of abstraction, instead of adorning the flower-border, have been dumped down by the drain ditch in the Orchard, and there, when Knowles has time, will be cracked up with a hammer to form the foundation of the road in the humble company of bits of old iron, broken glass, and stone Apollinaris bottles. But, if we only knew, this is perhaps a blessing in disguise, as thereby their ultimate destiny may be forwarded by several thousands of years. And yet not so, for there is *no* ultimate, since when at last once more they are gas or cosmic dust, the round will only begin again, and, after passing through changes more infinite than the imagination can conceive, doubtless trillions of years hence, perhaps on the bosom of strange universes, once more their very substance may be gathered back to flint.

I apologise deeply for this digression, for which my only excuse is that flints strike me as strangely fascinating stones. I promise, however, not to mention them again in the pages of this book. Now we come to the real glories of the new Rockery.

Many years ago some forebears dwelling in this house travelled in Italy, and brought thence an ornamental stone flower-stand, carved all over with grapes and birds. Ever since I have known the place this heavy article has been singularly in the way. At length nobody could put up with it any more, and it was hustled out into a greenhouse to be used as the receptacle for some large plant. There, however, it proved to be an even greater nuisance, so that it has passed the last three or four years lying in three bits beneath one of the stagings. Now, at last, like the flints, it has "arrived," and, standing on a slate bottom at the head of the Rockery, where it can be admired of every eye, it really does look appropriate, and, indeed, is the feature of the place—or will be when the weather allows of a handsome flowering plant being stood in its stone bird-adorned tazza.

The trouble of the Elm-tree beds, especially in these dry seasons, is that the multitude of roots beneath suck them until they become absolutely parched. Even now, towards the end of February, I see things wilting for lack of moisture. As this will happen also in the new rock-border, I set myself to overcome the difficulty, and have done so—thus: The border is backed by the paling that edges the Kitchen-garden pond and divided from the said garden by the Yew fence. On the other side of this fence stands the pump which we use to throw water into the drain supplying the tanks of the Orchid houses. To this pump we have affixed a piece of iron troughing, that passes through the fence and communicates with a length of old pump-tree, fashioned a hundred years or more ago out of heart of oak, and having a three inch bore through its centre, a by no means unornamental object.

All old wells were in former days furnished with these pump-trees, made from the tallest and straightest oaks that could be procured, which now, whenever repairs are undertaken, are replaced by iron pipes. Some of my readers may remember seeing such trees, although more roughly fashioned than those which are used in wells, dug out of the thoroughfare of the Strand eight or ten years ago, where they were laid in the time of Charles II. after the Great Fire, being, indeed, a relic of London's first attempt at a water supply. Hundreds of these lengths of black oak have been removed from wells in recent times, for the most part to finish their careers as gate posts; indeed, I took this one, and others that have vanished, out of the scullery well in this house about 1888, since when it has served as one of the supports of a saw-pit extemporised over a ditch. Now, its further end resting upon the edge of a half cask, which we have sunk into the ground, it has returned to its original use of conveying water. The result is that we shall be able to pump through the lengths of iron troughing and old tree into the tub, whence we can lift the water with a watering-pot or pail, and give the Ferns any moisture they may need with very little trouble to ourselves.

Under these circumstances, I think they ought to do well, as the place is airy, yet shaded, the made soil good-and, so soon as we get any rain to fill the pit, the water supply—I hope—ample. At present only one thing is lacking—Ferns, of which I shall have to buy some in the spring. We have, however, made a beginning by begging a quantity of roots of the handsome common sort that is to be seen in every town garden from the tenant of a farm near by. On this holding is a pretty little house, which until recently was occupied by a lady who improved its piece of front garden in which the Ferns grew. Now, however, she has gone away, and the house stands empty, since, although in the country the demand for cottages is eager, that for any dwelling which commands more than £4 a year rent is slack enough. So the boys in the village are digging up the bulbs that my friend planted, and, in accordance with their usual instincts, amusing themselves by smashing the windows of her pretty drawing-room; whilst I—with permission obtained—have removed some of the clumps of Ferns and variegated Periwinkles to my new Rockery, where, at any rate, they will be out of reach of that destroying demon, the village youth.

The Crocuses, some of them fine purple and white ones, are beginning to make a show upon the grass edgings of the drive, and to protect them I have had bushes thrust into the turf at intervals. If this is not done all dogs, and most human beings, will persist in preferring to walk on the twelve inches of edging rather than on the ten feet of drive, and Crocuses cannot flourish in a footpath. Indeed, it is curious how we all love a short cut and something soft to tread on. Such a short cut saves me three yards in reaching the wall-door by the well, and although I hate wearing the grass in this fashion, every year I have to instruct the gardener to put down hoops of hazel to prevent me from so doing. Indeed I rejoice exceedingly if, when the grass is mown, they are pulled up, and by accident not replaced, an omission, however, to which conscience always forces me to call attention.

On Friday the sowing of Onions and Parsnips went on, our last lot of Chrysanthemum cuttings were put in, more land was dug, and the bed of Strawberries in the Orchard was hoed to stir the soil and free it from weeds, although not too deeply. At this time of year it does not matter so much, but I have observed that later, when they are active, Strawberries greatly resent any injury to their roots. Also we were engaged carting water from the Lawn pond with the pony, to be run into the greenhouse tanks. Of course, if it had not been for our operations on the Kitchen-garden pond we should still have had a supply there, but it is odd to see the water-cart lumbering along on February 20.

On the 21st, a mild, windy day, we planted some Ash-leaf Potatoes on a warm border, with a south-east aspect, under the wall in the Old kitchen garden. The lines were set twenty inches apart in thoroughly prepared soil, from twelve to fourteen inches being allowed between each seed Potato, which is carefully placed with its eye or green shoot upwards, about three inches beneath the surface, in a trench made with a spade. Before this trench is filled in, a good sprinkling of kanite, mixed with basic slag, is thrown along it to give the seed a start.

In fact, it is, I think, too early to plant Potatoes, as the shoots are apt to get chilled and to rot in coming through the wet earth, also to be blackened by frost afterwards, a shock from which they never really recover. Still, in a favourable position, such as I describe, something may be risked, and early Potatoes, when you get them, are worth the hazard. Of course, I mean real English Potatoes, not the good-looking, but tasteless, rubbish that comes from abroad, and even from the Channel Islands, the product of the Jersey Fluke.

After finishing the Potato setting, more soil was placed on the Cucumber hot-bed, Mustard and Cress and some flower seeds were sown, the grass of the lawns was rolled with the pony, the Hyacinths in the Cold greenhouse were sticked, and wire guards were put over some of the Peas on which the sparrows are getting to work. On this day I saw the first bloom wide open in the Peach house, where, it will be remembered, there is no heat.

What a lovely thing is Peach bloom, but nowhere have I seen it look more beautiful than in South Africa. I cannot remember what year it was in or what journey I was on, but there comes to my mind the memory, after riding all day over the fire-blackened veld, of cresting a rise in the evening, and beholding immediately beneath me a Boer stead, and on the patch of irrigated ground about it a Peach-orchard in full bloom. I can see it now, that glorious flush of most delicate colour about the white-walled house, and all around, stretching for miles on miles, the wilderness flame-swept and untenanted. It is in such surroundings that we learn the true worth and beauty of flowers.

A little, very little, rain fell this night, and the 22nd was also mild and windy. This was Sunday, when, as there is no one working in it, the garden always seems somewhat lonesome. The beasts and birds know this. On Sundays the squirrels scamper across the lawns; the pheasants come out of the little patch of Shrubbery and walk unconcernedly in front of the windows, and the wood-pigeons arrive — not only those that breed upon the place, but many of their wild companions also—and scratch about beneath the Beech trees, beautiful, blue creatures, with white-ringed necks. Therefore it is a very pleasant day on which to walk in the garden and take note of the growth of all things, with the song of a hundred birds ringing in one's ears. Beautiful in their way also are the dull, soft sky, across which the grey clouds scud, and the tall tops of the Elms, thickening now with brown and swelling buds, as they sway in the rush of the wind.

Yes, now it is that the pure companionship of Nature can be enjoyed, and the institution of the Sabbath appreciated. Especially is this the case if the week's work has been very hard and its worries a little more numerous than usual, or if, as in the present instance, he who seeks that companionship has been enjoying the common "bronchial cough," and a sensation in his head that somehow reminds him of a bumble-bee, which follow on the attack of that hardy annual—should it not be called perennial?—the influenza.

On Monday, the 23rd, Freaks and Charles began the spring weeding of the tennis-courts. This is not so bad as the autumn weeding, inasmuch as no attempt is made to remove the tinier Daisies or Plantains, attention being confined to those of larger growth, but still a tedious job enough, and one that will occupy their spare time for a good many days. Indeed, if any effort is made to keep them well, there is no part of the garden that absorbs so much labour as do the lawns. Perhaps a summer may come when new crops of weeds will not spring in thousands among the grass, but in our case this still seems to be a long way off, doubtless for reasons that I have already given. In this spring weeding, by the way, I think that it is a good plan to roll the strip that is finished with a heavy roller each evening at the conclusion of the work, and thus press the turf down and fill up the holes before it grows dry and hard.

In addition to the weeding we turned more manure for the hot-beds, re-potted young Cucumber and Tomato plants, and made sowings of Lettuce, early Celery, and Sutton's Perfection Tomato. I do not think I mentioned that this year we have filled one of the cold frames, fixed on brickwork, with a hot-bed, and devoted it especially to the starting of our pans of flowers and other seeds, of which it is now quite full. Also we have placed several of our boxes of young Auriculas, sown about July last, in another little frame, which stands in a shady place and has no pipe or manure heat.

This frame was originally rather an elaborate contrivance, designed for the growing of Orchid seeds by the help of a paraffin lamp, with a large reservoir of oil, which burnt continually beneath a little galvanised tank filled with water. Although it was a good deal of trouble, and somewhat expensive in the matter of oil, it answered well enough until one day, while Mason was tending it, the whole large reservoir of paraffin exploded, with results that might have been disastrous to him, but, fortunately, only burnt his hand. After this I gave up that propagating-pit, and with it the raising of Orchid seeds, which, indeed, is a very troublesome business.

We learned how to cross-fertilise Orchids easily enough, a delicate and fascinating operation, which I hope to describe in a later chapter, and in due course secured quantities of seed of every kind, though, as I soon discovered, not without considerable weakening of the parent plants. In their wild state Orchids must seed very freely, as is proved by the number of old pods on imported specimens. Under artificial conditions, however, there is no doubt that seed-bearing has a grave effect upon their general health, perhaps because the pods hang so long, often nine months or more, before they ripen, although, of course, this condition must obtain also in their native homes.

Then comes the sowing of the dust-like seed, that I have practised in all ways—upon the moss in which the parents are potted, upon pounded fern roots, pieces of rough bark, sawn deal boards floating in water, &c. After different periods of time, according to the variety, appear a number of tiny green specks, no larger than the point of a pin, which are young Orchid plants. But now begin the grower's troubles—that is, if I may judge from my own case and that of a neighbour. Not only must these delicate seedlings be protected from all ordinary pests, such as slugs, wood-lice, and cockroaches, but also from the attacks of a little black fly not so big as a flea, which devours them ravenously. Further, they must never be allowed to get too dry or too wet, lest they should shrivel up or damp off. Thus, in the end, I came to the conclusion that, with the labour at my command, the game was not worth the candle, especially as it takes a good many years to grow most sorts of Orchids to a flowering size. Indeed, unless a speciality is made of it, which in a general garden like mine means the neglecting of other things, I think that the crossing of Orchids and their rearing from seed is best left to the great growers, such as Messrs. Sanders and others, who have followed this branch of horticulture with so much success. In the long run it is cheaper to buy established plants.

At Messrs. Protheroe's last auction I bought for eight shillings three lots of Barkeria Elegans, which are imported from Mexico, where, I understand, they are not very easy to collect. They have arrived, twelve plants to a lot, looking like little bundles of dry hazel twigs. Indeed, it is strange to handle those unpromising, and to all appearance dead sticks, and to know that with ordinary care they should next spring produce their nodding scapes of lovely flowers. But care they certainly require, on account, as I have explained, of the ferocity with which every insect-pest and slugs attack their succulent young roots. To protect them we have steeped the moss in which they are planted in a strong solution of X L, which will, I trust, destroy any eggs it may contain, after hammering it heavily to kill live insects. Further, the baskets have been hung from the roof in such a position that they can be touched by nothing else, precautions that I hope — probably vainly—will prove successful. Also we have re-potted in a similar fashion my old specimen of Barkeria, which has, I think, twice taken prizes at the Norwich Show. It is a lovely thing, and, apart from the insect difficulty, I find it very easy to cultivate; indeed, I wonder that it is not more largely grown.

I said just now that all wild things congregate in the garden on Sundays. Among them are bullfinches. To our dismay we find that these wretched little birds employed their last Sabbath morn in picking off nearly every bloom-bud on several of the Pear trees, whence I suppose that the soot and lime, with which they are dusted as a preventive, have been partially washed by the rain of Saturday night. The tomtits, too, have been busy on the Plum trees, notwithstanding their syringing with London Purple, a poisonous mixture, which one might think would disagree with any bird. We have placed what old nets we can spare over some of the Pears.

Also I have resorted to another expedient. Last year I purchased a large tin hawk, most realistically shaped and painted, and now it floats high in air above the Orchard. To get it there was not easy, but we managed it by sending the active Charles up an oak and a fir which grew opposite to each other on different sides of the Orchard. Then, having made the hawk fast to the centre of a length of strong wire, we fastened the ends of the wire to the tops of the two trees and tightened it.

Next day, however, the great gale which has done so much damage throughout the country, blew its worst, causing the tin hawk to dive up and down and gyrate in a most amazing fashion. For a long while it withstood the wind, but at last the wire snapped and the hawk swooped to earth as swiftly as it could have done had it been alive. So the whole business must be gone through again.

Whether or no this device will prove effective I am not sure, my own impression being that the birds will get used to it, as rooks do to a mawkin in the field. At present, however, they undoubtedly look at it with suspicion. Thus, I saw a blackbird, which was flying across the Orchard, catch sight of it and shoot to a great height in the air. Still, he continued his course to the plantation for which he was bound.

Personally, I love all birds (sparrows omitted), and do my best to protect them, with the exception of the bullfinch, which I look on as *hostis humani generis*, and as such to be destroyed whenever he is met with—in a fruit-orchard. In my opinion, his proper place is in a cage.

Accordingly, Mason has been armed with one of my guns and some No. 8 cartridges. He started out—news having been brought by a hot-foot messenger that "blood-oafs" were in the Orchard—bent on slaughter, and presently there were two loud reports. I ran from the house to ask if he had shot one. He replied, "No." I inquired, "Why not?" to which he answered, meekly, "I suppose, sir, because I did not hold the gun straight" —a very good and sufficient reason. Since then, however, he has slain one, for he produced its poor little remains proudly. To judge from their appearance they must have been uncommonly close to the muzzle. I am very sorry, but when it is a question between no Pears or Plums and bullfinches, I fear that the bullfinches must go.

A neighbour, who has three acres of Orchard, informs me that he has shot dozens of these birds this year. They seem to be very plentiful here, I suppose because there is no fruit-culture, and, therefore, nobody destroys them; indeed, my neighbour tells me that last spring he saw an enormous number—I think he said over fifty —on his trees at the same time.

In the Warm greenhouse I have three plants of the Cycas tribe, with cylindrical stems of about the size and height of a large cocoanut. These Cycads I found growing some thirteen years ago on a beautiful, wooded mountain in a little-visited part of Mexico, and admiring their glossy, pinnate leaves, of which, by the way, the natives told me donkeys are very fond, I dug up the plants and brought them home in a box. They thrive very well here, needing but little care, and are just now throwing up the young leaves, of which they bear three or four new ones each year, that gradually uncurl themselves like the fronds of a fern. What strikes me about these plants is their evident antiquity. Thus, I should imagine, judging by the great number of old leaf seats, that those I have must already have flourished for one or two centuries, especially as each leaf appears to last for several seasons. Although they seem in perfect health, the twelve or fourteen years during which I have cultivated them have made little or no difference in the appearance of their ancient, woody stems. Perhaps some reader will know to what age these Cycads really live, although I daresay that there are no others of this particular species in England.

Whilst looking at the Saxifrages in the Elm-tree garden to see if any of them were knotting for bloom, I noted a very curious instance of the vitality of green wood. When I was making this garden something over a year ago, I removed an overhanging bough from one of the Elm-trees. This bough was afterwards sawn up, and one piece of it, about three feet long by perhaps ten inches in diameter, laid lengthways on a bed as an ornament to be overgrown with plants. Last year it threw up a number of six or eight inch shoots, and this spring I observe the leaf-buds swelling bravely on those shoots.

What a struggle for existence do we see here! What a pathetic determination not to die! What a power of adaptation to circumstances so disastrously changed! This poor piece of wood, not only severed from the tree and roots that gave it nutriment, but hewn into lengths and placed sideways on the ground, more than a year afterwards still obeying the vernal impulse that influences its parent, and, like that parent, producing leaf in due season. How comes it that the wood has not dried by now? By what means has it contrived, lying, as it does, upon the surface of the earth, to prevent the sap of life from draining out of its two naked ends? The thing is a mystery.

We have discovered why the Mushroom house is so much hotter than it was last year, with the result that hitherto the Mushroom-beds have failed. Seeing a crack in the brickwork casing round the boiler-house chimney, which runs up at the end of the shed, I sent for the bricklayer, who has found, in addition to it and others, another great crack in the partition wall, through which, of course, the heat has been flowing, raising the temperature to that which prevails within the boiler-house. This is caused by a settlement, due, no doubt, to the recent dry seasons, which are desiccating our clay subsoil. It has been stopped with cement, and, if no other fissures remain undetected, I hope that we shall now get some Mushrooms. If only we could find a suitable place, however, I think that it would be far better to move the Mushroom house from the neighbourhood of the boiler, but I cannot go to the expense of building another shed, which would cost more than hundredweights of Mushrooms.

Up to the last day of February, although heavy rains have fallen in other parts of the kingdom, the drought in Norfolk and Suffolk has remained abnormal, if not absolutely unprecedented. All my deep greenhouse tanks are dry, a thing that in my experience has happened but once before, at the height of a particularly rainless summer, and the strange spectacle has been seen of the pony dragging up water to replenish them. Indeed, on the border round the Lawn pond certain perennials, which were transplanted there some weeks ago, are actually withering for lack of moisture. Here, by the way, the Crocus blooms are beginning to look very pretty.

A great deal of our time has been taken up this week in digging a deep trench for the galvanised iron pipe, by means of which the water from the pond—when there is any—is to be pumped to the house tanks. It is an untidy job, especially as, ram as one will, the soil and gravel cannot be got quite level again until time has been allowed for them to settle. One good result, however, is that it has given us the opportunity of cutting the Elm-tree roots which run under the path into the Old kitchen garden. Three years ago I made a trench to sever those roots, filling it up with broken glass, tins, and other débris, yet now, and on its further side, I find some of the thickness of my wrist, to say nothing of a multitude of fibres.

The power of roots is really marvellous; in South Africa I have known those of Blue-gums, not long planted, to lift solid walls many tons in weight; but, for the matter of that, a few Fungi beneath it will hoist up a solid paving stone. How comes it that soft things like Mushrooms are endowed with such gigantic strength? They can be crumbled between the fingers or crushed beneath an infant's foot; and yet, leave them alone, and in their struggle to reach the upper air they will raise a block of marble.

The sowing of seeds has been going on merrily all this week. Also we have been getting out more green scum from the pond, which is now low, with the help of a birch broom on a pole, and making ready trenches for the Sweet-peas, placing a good supply of decayed manure at the bottom of each trench. Another little job has been the digging of a drain round the edge of the enlarged pond, in order to prevent the surface water from flowing into it, bringing with it manure, &c., from the field. Also we have swept the drives, hoed the bulbs in the borders, re-potted the bedding Geraniums, and given the Pear trees another dusting with soot and lime, as an additional protection against our enemies the bullfinches.

MARCH

My neighbour who owns the three acres of Orchard has sent me a present of about a score of his Bramley Seedlings. Now, at the beginning of March, these fruits are in perfect condition, without a line or a wrinkle on them, of a noble size also. Myself, I grew some as fine on my young standard trees (my friend's come off pyramids) but they have all been seized upon and devoured, in the shape of tarts, dumplings, &c., the use for which they are supposed to be the best fitted. What I wish to urge, however, is that this fruit, which, taking all its qualities of vigour, size, appearance, and keeping properties into consideration, really has some right to the description whereby it is advertised, as the "finest Apple on earth," is not only one of the best of cookers, but also excellent to eat. We have consumed these of which I speak for dessert, and now that they are mellow with keeping, everyone was of opinion that we had tasted no better Apples for a long while, their slight sub-acid flavour adding to their attractiveness rather than otherwise. Of course, their size is against them as "eaters," but this can generally be got over by halving a fruit with somebody else.

I see that a new Apple, called "Charles Ross," is announced, of which great things are said. It is a cross between Cox's Orange Pippin and Peasgood Nonsuch. I suggest that a hybrid between Cox's Orange Pippin and Bramley Seedling would produce even finer fruit, of a sort exactly suited for dessert purposes. But perhaps it already exists.

During the first three days of this week we have at length had some rain, about half an inch in all according to my gauge, enough to damp the garden, but not to help the ponds, which remain as empty as ever. The worst of it is that in most parts of England the rainfall seems to have been sufficient, so why Jupiter Pluvius should treat Norfolk and Suffolk in this scurvy way is somewhat hard to understand. Undoubtedly, however, these are dry counties; indeed, I imagine that, say from here to Lowestoft, we get as little rainfall and as much sunshine as almost any place in England—a circumstance fortunate for pleasure-seekers, but not always so for farmers and gardeners.

On these wet days, amongst other indoor jobs, we re-potted the Crinum Moorei lilies, of which I keep about a dozen bulbs, and am rearing a stock of off-shoots to plant out and lift in winter, as though they were Dahlias. My first bulb of this lily was given to me by a lady, who brought it from Natal some sixteen or seventeen years ago. It is as strong to-day as it was then, and a good deal larger. From it I have reared a number of off-shoots; indeed, its progeny are to be seen in a great many greenhouses of the neighbourhood.

I know of few more useful or stately plants than this Crinum, with its spreading crown of broad, green leaves, its tall flower-stem, or stems, for often it bears two, carrying their bunches of noble bloom, that open successively, and are for the most part white, faintly tinged with rose. Further advantages of the plant are that it lasts a long time in beauty, is amenable to almost any system of culture, provided frost is kept from it (although it thrives most luxuriantly in a little heat), and even if out of flower remains an ornamental object, except, of course, when it is at rest. My general custom is to plunge my specimens in their pots in beds during the summer, and, when they die down, to winter them in the Tomato house, re-potting and moving the off-shoots once in every two or three years, when the thick, succulent roots become overcrowded. Now, as I have said, I am rearing up a stock of them in boxes, with the object of planting them out in the summer, and lifting and storing the bulbs in winter. This, however, takes some time, as even in pots they do not reach flowering size for about three years after removal from the parent.

I have three or four other varieties of Crinum, exclusive of Giganteum, which I believe requires stove heat, but for general usefulness and beauty none of them can compare with C. Moorei. C. Capense and C. Longiflorum do with me out of doors all the year round, under a south wall, as some people say C. Moorei will also, but their long, narrow foliage is not very handsome and their period of bloom short. Two fine bulbs of this tribe were sent to me last winter by a friend who lives in Mauritius, but as they have not yet started into growth I do not know their variety.[1]

I may mention two more points about C. Moorei. Coming from South Africa, where, oddly enough, I never remember to have seen any, naturally it likes sun. Indeed, one year I kept the plants during the summer months in the front porch, which is cool and shady, being north and easterly in aspect, with the result that they did not flower at all well the next season. The second point is that they want a great deal of water when in growth and, again following the conditions that prevail on their native veld, none at all when at rest. By the way, those other South African plants, the Imantophyllums, are now almost over. Indeed, one of the last of them, which stands in my study, is withering, and must be removed. They have made a fine show this year.

We have re-potted some Cymbidiums Giganteum and not before they needed that attention. It is, however, possible to meddle with the roots of these plants too often, in which case they go to growth and not to flower.

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[1] I regret to say that later on I found that both these bulbs had rotted.—H. R. H.

Another useful, but not very interesting, task has been pot-washing. I think that few things militate more against the health of most plants than the placing of them in dirty pots, of which the pores are full of sour soil. Before they are used again these should be well scrubbed in clean water with a stiff brush, and then set to dry in such fashion that the air, and, if possible, the sunlight, can get to every part of them. Further, we fyed out the drain ditch in the Orchard, so as to allow the foul, overflow water to get away more quickly, and continued cutting the trench from the pond to the pump, filling it in again after the pipes had been laid, a task that has taken a good deal of time, as the distance is considerable.

On Wednesday, the 4th, a fine day, vacant land was dug for Potatoes; and some roots of Rhubarb, which had been lifted for forcing in the Mushroom house, having served that purpose, were replanted in the open ground. My experience is that this process weakens them so much that they do not recover from it until two seasons afterwards; indeed, some of those that we set out last year died altogether. To get up a good stock of Rhubarb without buying extensively is a matter of time, especially as no leaves should be pulled for the first year after planting.

Nor is it wise for the gardener to confine himself to one variety. His object should be to prolong the season of this most useful vegetable as much as possible by growing early and late sorts, forcing some forward out of doors in the usual fashion, with the proper pots covered with manure, leaving some unforced to come on in its natural season, and making plantations both in the warmest and coldest situations at his command, by which means he can gather good Rhubarb over a long period, till September indeed. I have one excellent kind whereof, unfortunately, I do not know the name. It is small-leaved, pink-fleshed, and very delicate in flavour. I found it growing in the garden at Kessingland Grange when first I had that place, and some crowns which I brought over here two years ago are now coming into good bearing. Other sorts for main and late crop are planted respectively in the sunniest and shadiest situations in the Orchard.

Through the medium of that excellent little paper *Gardening Illustrated*, I have bought for five shillings fifty Montbretias in ten different varieties, and fifty Iris Kæmpferi, or Lœvigata, the beautiful Japanese Iris. How it can pay any grower to advertise and supply such a bundle of plants for the money, especially as they are sent carriage paid, with three fair-sized Lilium Auratum bulbs thrown in, is difficult to understand. Yet it is obvious that pay it must. The Montbretias we have planted in little lots in the bulb border round the pond, keeping them separate, with a view to increasing any that prove handsome. They were all named, but, unfortunately, the damp of the parcel has obliterated the writing on some of the slips of paper. The Iris Kæmpferi, which were sent in a mat with some soil still about their roots, we set in a couple of clumps in good soil in the water-bed at the edge of the pond itself, as this variety loves damp. I fear, however, that they will not flower this year.[1]

One of our troubles in this, as in all ponds, is the amazing growth of scum and weeds, which can be dealt with only by getting them out at intervals—a delicate and tedious business. With a broom, tied on to a long pole, we sweep the scum to the side, and then lift it, twisted round the twigs of the broom, and the rooted weeds we deal with as well as we can with rakes. In this way we have removed three or four barrow loads of noxious rubbish, now that the pond is so low, but, doubtless, there will soon be more to tackle.

Thursday being wet again, or, rather, drizzling, for we get no heavy rain here, we set to work to clean, whitewash, and rearrange the Warm greenhouse, a job which occupied Mason and Charles for two days. As a result, it is much fresher and sweeter than it has been for a long time past. In this greenhouse I hang my stock of Cattleya Citrina, a variety that grows and flowers downwards, although I have known people try to make it abandon this habit, needless to say, without success. This Cattleya loves sun, which is why I place it in an unshaded house; and I think that the common complaint—that it will not flourish long in English gardens—arises, for the most part, from a lack of sufficient attention to this idiosyncrasy. Doubtless, even under the best conditions, it does deteriorate in time, but I believe that I have one or two plants which still bloom, that I first saw in flower in Mexico in 1891.

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[1] In the season of 1904 my Kæmpferis bloomed beautifully.—H. R. H.

By the way, it would almost seem as though Orchids were especially intended to be grown in greenhouses; at least, those that I have seen there are certainly disappointing in their native haunts. Thus, in riding through the vast and gloomy forests of Chiapas, one perceives, high up on some great rib-rooted tree, a little patch of colour. It is a flowering Orchid, but its beauty and perfume can be appreciated by the birds and insects alone. Remove it from that tree and set it in a greenhouse, and it becomes a delight to man. With Ferns the case is different. Thus, in this same far country, I remember a grove of Palms, of which every old leaf seat was clothed with the delicate fronds of Maidenhair. Rocks and cliffs, I remember also, absolutely hidden with scores of Ferns, some of them like gigantic Hart's-tongues, having leaves six and eight feet long. Palms there were, too, and Begonias growing among them, of which I managed to tear down and collect a sackful, heedless of the risk of snakes, scorpions, tarantulas, and other stinging creatures, and carry thence upon a mule.

I had many adventures with that sack before I got it safe to England. For instance, once it was lost, and, hunting for it with a lantern in the freight van of an

American train, I stumbled rather badly over a coffin containing a corpse that was being "mailed" to some distant part of the States for burial. But, in the end, it arrived, and some of the plants, among them a Begonia, are now in the Warm greenhouse, and a very graceful Palm, which produces a curious inflorescence from the stem, and much grown, stands in the hall at this moment.

To return to C. Citrina. What a lovely colour is that of its thick fleshy bloom, and how exquisite the lemon-like odour which, with its hue, gives it its name. There are few more beautiful flowers, but, owing to its habit, it is useless for cutting; indeed, placed the right way up, it looks absurd. But why, I wonder, did it ever begin to grow head downwards?

On this day also we sowed some Stocks, Asters, Verbenas, and other half-hardy annuals, and transferred Cucumber plants from their pots to the prepared soil, in which they are to grow in the frames.

On the two last days of the week we have been engaged in giving sundry of the paths, that have been broken up for the pipe and drain trenches, a coat of fresh gravel, in order to make them look decent for the summer. There are two places where excellent gravel can be obtained in this parish, but I am sorry to say neither of them on ground that belongs to me. One is a pit that must be very ancient; probably, to judge from its size, it has already yielded tens of thousands of loads. The stuff here is of good colour and of high binding quality. The larger stone is sold for road-making purposes, to which, like much other in the neighbourhood, it is not very well suited, being too soft. The next sifting is capital for drives, and the fine stuff, or silt, as it is called, which fetches the top price of half a crown a load, is used for garden paths, and is in great request for some miles round.

Unfortunately, the next best gravel pit in the parish, which has never been worked, is now in use as a cemetery, a purpose to which, for reasons that need not be entered into, such soil is quite unsuited. I do not know how it came about, for it happened just before my day, but when the churchyard needed enlarging this piece of land was acquired at a very considerable initial cost, since, being glebe, it involved all sorts of legal expenses. Another piece of desirable clay soil, which would have formed a natural continuation to the old churchyard, was neglected in its favour, with the result that our present cemetery is a gravel pit, in which no one can dig gravel, at least, not for removal. The pan extends, however, a little way into the next field, which is now leased by the Incumbent to the District Council for road-making, the silt remaining the property of the Living.

Two years ago, finding it necessary for the second time during my tenure to re-gravel the carriage drive, I purchased a hundred loads of this silt, which has only to be carted a quarter of a mile. Having first laid on some stone from one of my own pits, I applied the silt as a top-dressing three or four inches thick, and with excellent results. Even when the House Farm carts can be employed, and the material obtained cheaply, gravelling is an expensive process, although when once down no other stuff is half so good either in wear or appearance. I remember that when first I gravelled eighteen or nineteen years ago, my tenants lent carts to help the business forward. But the day of such amenities has gone by. Now few landlords would care to ask for an assistance that might be granted unwillingly, if at all.

In gravelling, the great points are to pick up the old roadway, so as to make a bed to which the new silt can cling; to provide a good layer of larger stone, in order to insure wear; to lay the gravel on evenly above this large stone, as soon as possible after it comes from the pit, and to roll it down when it has been watered, either by rain or artificially. Then, before traffic is allowed on it, it should be left, if possible, for a week or two to settle, as otherwise it churns up, and much of its binding power seems to be lost. Unfortunately, when we did one of the paths last Friday, we forgot that the tank in the Intermediate house was again empty, and, there being no water, in the new Kitchen-garden pond with which to pump it full, we have been obliged to cart from the Lawn pond. This has cut up the fresh gravel sadly, that, in consequence, must be re-rolled.

No one would think it, but even in pure gravel soil there must be nutriment. Thus, fifteen or sixteen years ago, I planted the cemetery in this parish with sundry Scotch, Silver, and Austrian firs, digging good holes in the gravel, but adding no fresh soil. A dry summer or two followed, and many of the trees died. Some survived, however, and these are now growing into really fine specimens. They are in vigorous health, and, few as they seemed at first, will ultimately prove almost sufficient to adorn the whole graveyard. Indeed, these trees flourish best in that soil as is proved by the following circumstance. When the particular lot of which I speak were procured from the nurseryman I inlaid them in clay soil in a little plantation at my gate until the holes were dug for their reception. A few which were not needed were left *in situ* in the clay, and have now grown up, but they are not half the size of those that were transferred to the cemetery.

The weeding of the tennis-court still goes on. I wish that it did not.

On Sunday, the 8th, I found the first Daffodils out, in a sheltered spot in the shrubbery. They are the old double kind, probably those that Shakespeare spoke of as "taking the winds with beauty." Or does he refer to the wild Daffodil, than which, after all, few of the species are more lovely? It is rather rare with us in Norfolk, and, indeed, grows nowhere in my immediate neighbourhood, but how glorious look the fields in Hertfordshire when it is out towards the end of April!

These particular clumps of old double-yellow have, to my knowledge, stood in the same places on the Front lawn and Shrubbery, notwithstanding chain-harrowing and the trampling of animals on the former, for more than twenty years; indeed, if I may trust to the memory of others, for over forty. I do not observe, however, that they increase at all. Probably, if such a clump of Daffodils is left to itself, it attains the natural limit of its size, beyond which it does not extend, unless lifted from time to time and replanted. Nor do they seem to grow from seed, as I presume the wild Daffodils do, since, otherwise, why do these appear in such multitudes? I have noticed, however, in their natural haunts that certain patches of ground will be covered with them, whereas on those immediately adjacent there may be few or none. So perhaps the quality of the soil has a great deal to do with the matter.

On this lovely evening, although the sky promised frost, the birds were in full song, and what a chant it is that they put up in our wooded Norfolk! To appreciate them fully one must have lived abroad a good deal. How *morne* and silent, for instance, before the flowers bloom in spring, seems the grey Italian landscape, with never a bird's song to delight the ear. I suppose that this is because the thrifty Italians shoot or catch all the little birds and eat them on toast in the city shops. In warmer countries, of course, there are few such songsters. There the birds are given bright plumes instead of sweet voices, for even these Nature, the just, does not endow with every charm.

On Monday we planted out a bundle of Periwinkle roots—I suppose the name is a corruption of that which Pliny gives it, Pervinca, or so the French word Pervenche would seem to suggest.

These are the ordinary blue kind, and came from my garden in Kessingland, where they grow well even in the full blast of the east wind. Now they are set in the shade and shelter of the Yew hedge, and it will be curious to see how they like the change. Certainly, none could be more complete. Also, since as yet there are not many bees or other insects about to work for us, we fertilised the Peach blooms in the Orchard house. This we do periodically, either by tapping the stems and branches of the trees to shake the pollen from flower to flower, or sometimes with a camel's hair brush or a feather. The show of bloom on these trees is very good indeed, especially upon those which, as I have described, we root-pruned last autumn twelvemonth. Indeed, I never remember seeing so many.

I have been reading some letters in the *Times* on the subject of secret commissions, which are said to be given by large firms of seedsmen to gardeners who order stuff on behalf of their masters. I do not envy any employer who has reason to suspect that such things are going on. Fortunately, as I believe, many gardeners still remain who are above entering on these dishonest courses, for it would be difficult to describe them by any other word.

More to blame, however, are those who put temptation into the way of men living on a weekly wage. Still, there are, doubtless, dishonest gardeners. For instance, a friend of my own took a house with large grounds, in which a number of men were employed, but his wife complained that she could seldom get enough vegetables for the table. When he discovered that the greengrocer's cart was constantly to be seen in an adjacent lane, an answer to the problem was suggested. Theoretically, such things should be guarded against by a master ordering and paying for everything himself, but time is short, and one must trust somebody.

I have standing in my study a beautiful blooming Amaryllis, Hippeastrum Aulicum, the old red-flowered variety, with a green tinge at the bottom of the cup and purple blotches above it, which comes out earlier than the hybrid Hippeastrums. This is an offshoot from a large bulb that I bought at a sale several years ago. At first, thinking to make a great specimen of it, I did not remove the side bulbs, with the result that after a few seasons the clump ceased to flower. Then I broke it up, and now the separated bulbs are beginning to bloom again, though there will be no show of them for another year.

On the Tuesday all hands, excepting Mason, were engaged weeding the tennis-courts—I am thankful to say for the last time this spring, for at length that tedious task is finished. Now we shall scatter a couple of pounds of lawn seed about their surface, and with it a sprinkling of sand, after which I trust that the results will be satisfactory.

Mason has begun pruning the Roses, which we have not liked to touch before, although they were getting forward in growth, fearing sharp frosts that still may come. If the shoots are perished after pruning, then farewell to the hope of a good show of bloom, as a long while must pass before more appear to replace them. Whereas those that are cut off now for the most part push towards the end of the boughs, the others lower down being still more or less dormant. Rose-pruning ought to be numbered among the fine arts, there is so much to be considered.

Thus, Teas, the majority of which make but little wood, although there are exceptions, such as Gloire de Dijon, neither require nor will bear extensive hacking. Then the shape of the bushes must be remembered, for if allowed to become lop-sided they look unsightly, and care should be taken to remove wood in the centre, so that sun and air reach every part. The weak, unripened growths ought to go also, only those which are strongest being retained, and, of course, all that are sere or dead. Those shoots which are ultimately selected for bearers we cut back so as to leave from three to six eyes, according to their strength, preserving, however, a bough here or there to be arched over some vacant space in the bed, and held in place by a hook of wood.

By the way, I wonder if any of my readers will have noticed the bad effect of fastening zinc labels with wire of the same metal to Rose boughs. I have observed that when this is done the branch to which the label is tied almost invariably dies away down to the root. So frequently has this happened in my case, indeed, that we now affix the labels to stakes of wood, which are set in the ground by the bush or standard. Perhaps the zinc produces some electrical action which is fatal to Rose life, but this, of course, is a pure conjecture.

Owing to the mildness of the season, we have lost very few Roses this year. Indeed, I only found one actually dead—an old standard. Such gaps as there were we filled up with three or four little bushes, grown by ourselves from cuttings struck the autumn before last off sorts of remarkable beauty. They are the last we have, so we must remember to take more. The long litter strewn upon the beds as a protection against frost has now been raked off, only the short stuff being left. This we are pointing in, and with it a good dressing of dissolved bones.

The Snowdrops are almost over now, and the Hyacinths in the greenhouse past their best. I think I like Paix de l'Europe, a white, and Leopold III., a blue, as well as any that I have grown this year, but they are both single varieties. The Chionodoxa, which are planted against the south side of the house, are now out. What a beautiful blue they are! I believe they call them Glory of the Snow; indeed, that is the translation of their name, but here they are by no means an early bulb. I wonder if these are the same that I have seen growing wild in Italy, literally among the snow; or, perhaps, those were Scillas.

We have made an edging of clinkers and flints to the tiny border by the Yew hedge where we planted the

Periwinkles, and sowed some Parsnips in the Orchard, covering the seed with burnt earth, after dressing the bed with bone manure. Also—this was on the Wednesday—we planted a breadth of Jerusalem Artichokes in one of the worst and most shaded situations in the Stable garden. It is a vegetable that I do not much admire, but, if kept clean and not starved, it seems to grow almost anywhere. Why, coming from Brazil, is it named after Jerusalem, where, so far as I saw in Palestine, it is not? Further, we have swept and rolled the lawns after the weeding.

I walked on the Bath or Vineyard Hills that afternoon, an extraordinarily sheltered spot facing south, and protected by its steep bank, eighty or ninety feet in depth, crested as it is with fir and other trees, from every breath of north and easterly winds. Here things are getting very forward, and my little girl, who was with me, gathered quite a nice posy of Primroses and Violets.

A neighbour has given us a bunch of Eucharis-lilies, really beautiful specimens of this lovely flower. The bulbs from which they were cut have been in the same pan for no less than twenty-four years. I have several pots of E. Amazonica and E. Grandiflora, but I cannot say that hitherto I have been very successful with them, chiefly, as I believe, because we lack enough heat to meet their requirements. My neighbour declares that the secret is to top-dress, but never to re-pot, and certainly in her case this seems to have answered very well. But when I was in Jersey, on my "Rural England" journey, I saw Eucharis grown by the thousand, which were said to bloom three times a year, and were very sharply rested in summer. My own belief is that those cultivators of this lily who have sufficient bottom heat will succeed with them, and those who lack the same will fail. However, I have now re-potted mine upon a brand new system, of which I will not talk until I know the result. I remember that I bought them eight or ten years ago from a Dutch grower, who, in his accompanying letter, informed me that "the bulbs which come herewith are *nice and splendid.*"

In the Warm greenhouse I have two or three plants of Camellias that have stood there for the last eighteen or twenty years. This season they have bloomed fairly, dropping but few buds, but they are now going over. Were it not for old association's sake, I do not think that I should keep them. The Camellia, in my opinion, is not a greenhouse pot-plant. To produce a really good effect, it should grow in the open, as it does in Guernsey or South Africa, and be allowed to attain to a large size. Once, however, not very far from London, I saw a long glasshouse which was entirely given up to Camellias. They were planted in the ground in a made peat soil, in which the same bushes were said to have stood for, I think, fifty or sixty years, and certainly their appearance, when covered with thousands of red and white blooms, was magnificent.

The Cœlogynes in the Cool orchid house are also going over, their snow-like tresses turning to little lumps of brown corruption—the old lesson of perfect beauty followed by the Nemesis of inevitable decay. Perhaps it would have been better to cut them and send them away as presents, but I have not had the heart. One year, when we were going to London, I remember that we did so. Just as we were in the direful act, my old gardener, he who is now retired, peeped through the door, and lifting his hands in horror, departed. Meeting another member of the household, he said, in a tragic voice, indicating the Orchid house with his thumb, "Don't *yew* go in there; there ain't nothing left for *yew* to see. The master and Miss —— be a snipping of 'em all off—*shameful!*"

Every morning before breakfast I walk round the houses and employ myself in killing woodlice, which I catch in hollowed out potatoes put upon the pots. It is a disgusting deed that I hate, but one which I think it my duty to fulfil—even before breakfast. Of these horrid insects there are inexhaustible numbers, all of which must live upon Orchid roots; indeed, if one has not looked at it for a few days, it is not uncommon to find a score of them in a single potato. The trouble is that no insecticide will affect their hard skins, and if they smell any unpleasant fume in the house, they bury themselves among the crocks until it has evaporated. So one must trap and squash them. I forget the name of the Buddhist sect whose faith particularly prevents them from killing any living thing. I presume that its devotees do not grow Orchids, in which event they would either modify their views as to the sacredness of insect life, or be forced to abandon that gentle craft.

On the 12th, we removed the litter from the new Aspara̍gus bed in the Orchard and gave it a dressing of burnt earth, which will be followed by one of salt; made a sowing of Spinach; took away the protection of ashes from the Globe Artichokes and perennial Lobelias; planted out a few Currant bushes reared from cuttings, and repotted some Tomatoes and Agathæas. The latter, A. Cœlestis, is a very pretty flower in the greenhouse, and can be set abroad in summer. I think it is often called the Cape Daisy, and, indeed, it resembles a blue Daisy, although I believe that it belongs to the Cineraria tribe.

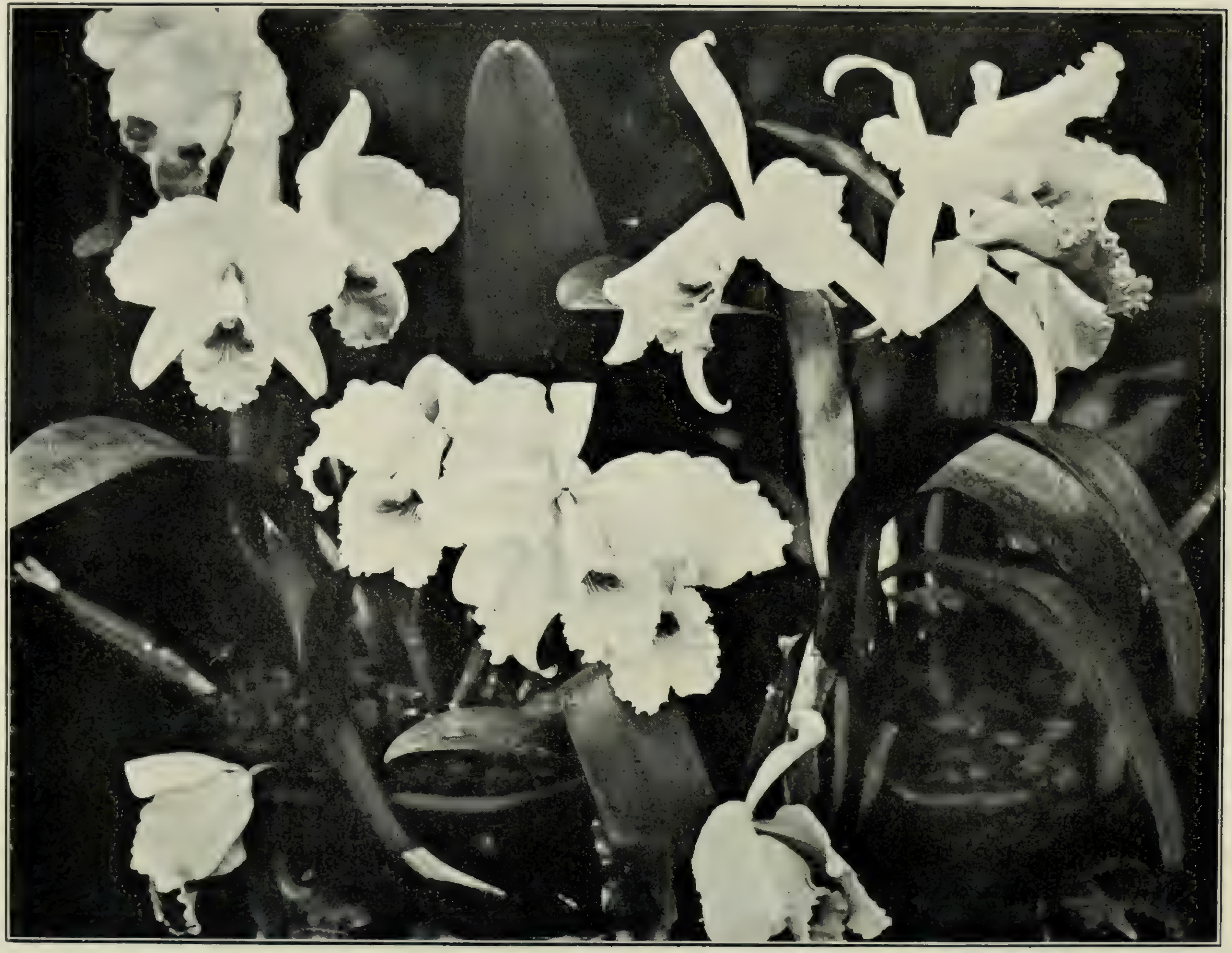
I noticed that a spray of Ampelopsis, which chances to grow over a ventilator of the Intermediate house through which warmth comes, is in full leaf, although all the rest of the creeper to within a few inches of it remains lifeless, except for the pink buds which are gradually becoming visible. This is a curious example of the effect of local warmth producing results that are quite independent of anything to do with root action. The roots of the creeper on this north wall must still be somnolent, yet one branch of it, which is acted upon by warm air, breaks into active life.

For the last two days of the week we have been mainly engaged in the annual task of clipping the Ivy which covers the front of the house. To do this satisfactorily, and, indeed, without some risk on a three-storied building, where long ladders are required, the weather must be windless. This Ivy I planted about thirteen years ago. Being a slow-growing creeper, especially on a north aspect, it is now only beginning to cover the house in a satisfactory fashion; indeed, it will, I think, take another year or two to form the dense green mat which is needed to hide every particle of brickwork.

Opinions differ as to the desirability of Ivy on a house, but I think, if kept properly clipped, that it is a great relief to wide expanses of plain brick and covers a multitude of architectural sins. Some people believe that Ivy causes damp. This is an opinion with which I cannot at all agree, seeing that the thousands of little tentacles by which it clings to a wall must, on the contrary, suck up every particle of moisture from bricks and mortar. On the whole, I consider it the most desirable of creepers, much better, for instance, than Ampelopsis Veitchei, which, although beautiful in summer and gorgeous in autumn, for some six months of the year is nothing but a network of brown sticks. I wish now that wherever I planted Ampelopsis, Ivy had been set instead.

We have been sowing more Gradus and English-Wonder Peas; also Mustard and Cress for succession, and French breakfast Radish. The Auriculas have been moved from the Tomato house, where the sun was beginning to scorch them, into the Cool greenhouse, to take the place of some of the Hyacinths which are gone over. Further, we set more Potatoes in the Stable garden, dissolved bones being used as a fertiliser, and dressed some land with wood ashes and lime to prepare it for small seeds.

The weather was very mild and beautiful—as yet there is no breath of east wind—and the white Violets



CATTLEYA TRIANÆ (*Bloomed at* DITCHINGHAM) have come out in plenty under a tree on the Front lawn. In the Intermediate house the Cattleyas Trianæ are making a fine show; also there are one or two plants of the yellow-throated Cat. Schroederæ in bloom, the most beautiful of them all perhaps, except C. Aurea. They smell like a field of new-mown hay.

The week ending on the 21st of March has been singularly warm and mild, remarkable also for its persistent, tearing gales from the south-west. Up to the present we are still without any easterly winds, a strange circumstance, to which I can remember no parallel. Doubtless, however, they will come in time, since all this air must return from wherever it blows to, or so it seems to the unlearned. At any rate, I have observed that whenever the wind has set for a long period of time from one quarter, it is apt to blow for an approximately equal time from that which is opposite. On the 17th we had some rain at night, about a quarter of an inch according to the gauge, a very welcome shower, which caused the field drains to work a little. But as yet there is not half a foot of water in my new pond.

On the 16th I found the Figs coming into leaf on the back wall of the Tomato house, which, as I think I said, is warmed with a little independent boiler built into the wall. The young Fig leaf is a very beautiful object when it begins to open. Its shape and the hundreds of delicate lines upon its inner surface, remind me of a new-born baby's hand. I am by no means sure that we do not keep Figs under glass too dry at the roots in winter, a remark which applies also to most other trees that are protected in this fashion. My reason for thinking thus is that, as I have seen in Cyprus and the Holy Land, the heaviest rains fall during the winter season while the Figs are at rest, whereas, at the time when they are in leaf and bearing, the soil becomes quite arid. On the other hand, in the Transvaal, where Figs also do well, they receive most rain in summer. So perhaps it does not matter when the moisture is absorbed by the roots, so long as they receive enough of it at one period or another of the year.

We have been sowing some New Zealand spinach, Tetragonia Expansa, which I suppose is not a true spinach, although, when cooked, its flavour is practically identical, but, to my taste, more delicate. The seed is curious in appearance, not unlike to that of some species of Conifers. With us this kind is not altogether hardy, so we sow in boxes, setting the seeds about an inch apart, in such fashion that it will be possible to transfer the young plants to their permanent quarters without disturbance, lifting them by means of a small trowel with a little ball of earth about the roots. This variety, which from its appearance, is also called the New Zealand Ice plant, forms a little procumbent bush upon the ground, and is as pretty as it is useful. In my garden the slugs are so ravenously fond of all sorts of spinach that sometimes we find it difficult to rear a crop. As a preventive, we are treating a piece of land in the Old garden, where the soil is fine, with a light dressing of gas lime, which will, I trust, have ceased to be harmful to plant life by the time that this sowing is ready to set out—say, in three weeks or a month from now. Gas lime is the one substance that seems to prevail against slugs.

Also we sowed some Capsicum seed of the large-fruited variety, which, while green, does not burn the mouth. These Capsicums, or, rather, their skins, for the seeds and white pith must be avoided, although few people in England seem to be aware of it, are delicious to eat with bread and butter. The drawback to them, however, is that most people find them exceedingly indigestible.

On the 17th we made an extensive sowing in the Old kitchen garden of small seeds, for transplanting in due season, such as those of Cabbages, Broccoli, Brussels-sprouts, &c., marking each bed with labels so as to prevent mistakes. The land is in very good tilth for this purpose just now. Also we trimmed the grass edgings in the flower garden, and cleaned and rolled the walks. On the 18th and 19th we were chiefly engaged in re-staking the espalier Apples and Pears and tying the boughs to their new supports with tarred twine. These stakes we buy of woodmen, who cut them from coverts in the neighbourhood when engaged in taking down the annual fell. For the most part they are Ash, Hazel, and Hornbeam, of about an inch in diameter, or a little less, and will generally stand for two or three years before they rot at the base, after which their tops are useful to support stout perennials or dwarf Dahlias, &c., for another season. Their price is a penny apiece trimmed and pointed, or a halfpenny in the rough. We buy them in the latter state, and do the trimming ourselves on wet days.

In some well-appointed gardens strained wire fences are set up, to which the boughs of the espaliers are tied. Of course, this is the neater plan, but such wiring is very expensive, and, like everything else, likely to get out of order in course of time; also the wires do not always run at the exact height at which it may be desirable to train a shoot. On the whole, therefore, I prefer the old-fashioned stakes, whereof fewer become necessary as the trees increase in size and grow strong enough to support those parts of the boughs that are nearest to their stems. But, as I think I have said, I will never plant another espalier, as the shape to which trees are thus forced is quite unnatural, and involves a great deal of labour in pruning, training, staking, &c. Nor, in my judgment, do they, after all, succeed so well or bear such fine fruit as pyramids or bush trees, which grow upwards as nature intended them to do.

On visiting the Lawn-pond border, now very beautiful with the gold and purple of the Crocus, I found that we had at last caught one of the mice which were eating the bulbs. There it sat in the trap, a trembling little creature with large, round eyes, of a different variety, I think, to those which plague us in the house. Unfastening the trap from its stake, I advanced to the pond to drown that mouse—and hesitated. Thrice did I put down my hand to do the deed of death, and thrice, like false Sextus, did I shrink back. It seemed so pitiful a thing to plunge that little animal, with the bright, beseeching eyes, which doubtless loves its life as much as we do and is happier in it, into the water and hold it there until it slowly choked. What a devil it would think me, if it could think, and how very like a murderer I should feel!

The end of it was that I climbed railings, opened several gates, and took quite a long walk until I found a distant ditch in which I deposited the mouse. I dare say that by now he is back at the pond and once more at work among the Crocus bulbs. To Mason, however, I merely remarked that I had caught a mouse in the trap, without entering into its subsequent history. He thanked me, saying that he had forgotten to look that morning, a fact which may make others of the tribe jealous of the luck of this particular mouse. The truth is that, as we grow older, killing anything in cold blood, woodlice, wasps, and black beetles excepted, becomes a very distasteful task. And yet we go out shooting—some of us, be it admitted, with many qualms of conscience—until the rocketers begin to fly.

We have been moving our bedding Geraniums into a frame and collecting a fresh supply of manure for Mushroom beds. There will not be much more of this available now, as I observe Carrots beginning to appear in the stable, a root that is fatal to Mushrooms. A man has been engaged in repainting the iron water-cart with red-lead paint, giving it three coats inside. The manure water from the house contains so much soda that while being carted to the fruit-trees, &c., it eats away the paint. Unless this is replaced it would in the end destroy the cart, a very useful article, which I had built some years ago—

it cost £6 I remember—of such a shape that it could negotiate all the gates and paths. In these matters a stitch in time saves nine. In many gardens, and, I may add, on still more farms, the waste that goes on because of the neglect of these simple precautions is enormous.

Also we made sowings of Corn salad, a useful and much-neglected winter vegetable; Parsley, Celeriac, Rhubarb of the Prince Albert variety, to go on for bearing roots in future years; Vegetable Marrows known as Moore's Cream, and Eryngiums, or Sea Holly, I forget of which sort, for the flower garden. Further, we filled in the trenches in the Orchard ready to receive Asparagus roots, and pricked out some seedling Stocks into boxes.

On the 20th we very carefully forked over all the outside portions of the large perennial flower-bed opposite the Cold orchid house, giving it at the same time a dressing of artificial manure, Here grow many Pansies. These we lifted, and ultimately reset the best of them. Later in the year they ought to make a pretty show. We are running short of pots of certain sizes, no new complaint. What becomes of all the pots in a garden is to me a mystery, but I suppose that a certain number of them go the way of wine glasses in the pantry. Also more are ever wanted. I have told Mason to write to Sankey for one of his catalogues, because (this is *not* an advertisement) his are the best pots I know, and I notice that, owing, I suppose, to the superior quality of the clay used, they seldom become foul and green. There are few things more unpleasant and productive of dirt and pests than pots of rough, porous, and uneven texture, which after some months in a warm house coat themselves with an unwholesome slime.

On the Friday Knowles was employed in removing Elm-shoots from the trunks of the old trees, as it is necessary to do every second year or so. One would imagine that if they were left these trunks would soon become clothed with a growth of small boughs, yet on untended Elms, in the pastures and elsewhere, this is not the case. I suppose that when they attain a certain size they must die away in the shade, or perhaps some varieties, to which these particular big trees may belong, are more liable to throw out such shoots.

Talking of Elms reminds me that I forgot to mention that when we were forking up the bed opposite to the Cold orchid house, we found it becoming full of fibrous Elm-roots. This seems somewhat remarkable, seeing that only last year I cut a three-foot deep trench in the adjoining path, and severed every root that could be found. It appears, therefore, either that the severed ends still live and produce fibres, or that these are thrown up from yet deeper running roots below. This, at any rate, is beyond dispute—do what the gardener may, if there is good soil anywhere within reach of an Elm tree, it will get there.

We moved some rooted Chrysanthemum plants into larger pots, as the others were filled with roots, and took the bed of Christmas Roses in hand. These Hellebores are now in active growth and throwing up bunches of young leaves. I think, therefore, that this must be the time when they want feeding, so we have sprinkled artificial manure here, forked it in lightly, and covered the new turned ground with a mulch from the Mushroom bed. This I hope will help to keep in the moisture, as I am convinced that the reason why we do not succeed with Christmas Roses as well as we might do is owing to the lack of the damp they love, especially in these dry years.

On the Saturday I observed clusters of young Strawberries already set upon two plants of the perpetual-fruiting variety known as St. Antoine de Padoue. Surely this must be unusual. Last spring I imported a dozen potted-up suckers of this sort from abroad, of which a rabbit that got into the garden ate five. From the seven remaining plants I reared enough runners to set three long rows in the autumn, most of which now seem very sturdy and thriving, and will, I hope, fruit well this summer.

I have been told great things of this Strawberry, and one or two that I tasted last year off the imported plants certainly seemed very good. There was about them a wild flavour, which has quite vanished from many of our large and highly developed fruits.

My plants of Doronicum Excelsum, or Leopard's Bane, are beginning to make a brave show with their tall, yellow, daisy-like flowers. At this time of year they are very useful in the open garden. The Golden Spur Daffodils on the Old Vinery border also are now in full blow and very beautiful. They have, however, quite outstripped all their fellows on the same bed, although certain of these, especially the Emperors, were planted long before, which gives it a somewhat one-sided appearance. One other sort, I think it is called Stella, is flowering on the Pond border, and others of a diminutive trumpet kind, of which I do not know the name, are opening in the grass at the side of the drive where I planted them four or five years ago.

In the Orchid houses there is not much fresh to note, except two blooms of the white and star-like Angræcum Sesquipedale. Alas! they are the only two. I have already mentioned the trouble into which I have fallen with these Orchids this year, that, for some reason at present quite unexplained, has caused all the flowers to turn yellow and rot as they began to develop, although the plants themselves look in the best of health. The net result is that, instead of some sixteen blooms, I have but two. Why these two should have survived is in itself a mystery, seeing that, theoretically, the same cause which destroyed the others ought to have destroyed them; indeed, all the rest on the spikes that bear them shrivelled up and were removed. Yet these two are quite perfect. So soon as we get some new Sphagnum moss, I intend to turn all the Angræcums out, examine their roots, and re-pot them. Perhaps then I shall learn why this thing has happened. Another little Angræcum, Apiculatum, I think, bearing a many-flowered and most sweet-scented spike, is also in bloom, and perfumes the whole house. In shape and general characteristics it is very like A. Sesquipedale, only not a sixth part of its size.

The glory of the Cool orchid house is now over; every morning do I cut away faded Cypripedium blooms, and the rotting tresses of Cœlogyne have been removed by scores. Their time of beauty has gone by, and soon many of the fat green bulbs will begin to shrivel and rest until the season comes for the new growths to appear at their bases.

Without, spring has begun in earnest; for once it is up to date. The white flowers are appearing on the Myrobella fence round the Orchard, the Apricots are in full bloom, the Hawthorns are pushing their green leaves, the Pears are opening their flowers, the Apples thrusting up their buds, and the grass in front of the shrubbery belt is everywhere starred with yellow Primroses and deep blue Violets.

Dotted about the garden beds some plants of Saxifrage Megasea are in bloom. I think the variety is called Purpurascens; at least, its leaves turn purple in autumn. In my opinion, its rose-coloured spikes of flower are singularly charming and attractive. I wish that I had more of them.

On Sunday, the 22nd, which was warm, bright, and windy, I found the first Anemones out on the Filbert border in the Stable garden. How gorgeous are these flowers to behold, with their hues of vivid scarlet and purple. To be really appreciated, however, they should, I think, be seen in their native home—the East. In the neighbourhood of Mount Tabor, in Palestine, I have met with them in such millions that for miles the whole plain is stained red, blue, and white; growing so thickly indeed, that to walk across it without setting foot on a flower at every step would be difficult. I believe, and I think that this view is very generally accepted, that these are the same Lilies of the field that "toil not neither do they spin," which our Lord used to illustrate His immortal lesson. Truly, "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

On this evening the stable-boy, when bringing the ponies from the lawn, neglected to first shut one of the garden gates, with the result that, seeing a long-sought opportunity, two of them rushed through it and proceeded to gallop about the Old kitchen garden, more particularly among the new seed-beds. Then they betook themselves to the croquet lawn, where they had a fine scamper, making holes in the turf at every step. Luckily, however, the lawn-tennis courts were spared. As I expected, Mason's face was a study on the following morning, when he and Charles were engaged for an hour or more lifting the trodden-in turf, filling the holes with sand, and repairing the beds. However, it might have been worse.

On the 23rd, when weather of the same character prevailed, we planted more Potatoes of the Up-to-date variety, sowed our main crop of James's Intermediate Carrot, both in the Orchard, and cleaned the herbaceous border. Also we re-potted our Gloriosa Superba—about five pans full—which I have reared from a single bulb given me by a friend some years ago. This curious creeper, which belongs, I believe, to the Lily tribe, is now common in South Africa, amongst other places, and I am told grows freely in Rhodesia. I think its twisted, bright-hued flowers very quaint and beautiful, although with me it does not produce many of them to a plant, probably because it would like more heat than I can give in the Warm greenhouse, where it grows. The great thing is to keep the bulbs quite dry in winter, lest they should rot, and in the soil in which they have flourished through the summer. These fork-shaped, whitish bulbs, which must be handled carefully owing to their brittleness, are very curious objects. We set five or six of them together, with the points downwards, in a mixture of loam, sand, and cow-dung, and then put them in the Cucumber frame to start.

We potted up a pan of young Auriculas, sown about this time last year—I think there were thirteen of them in all. These are the sole result of four or five packets of prize-strain seed bought at different establishments. From some of my own seed, on the other hand, taken straight from the pods and sown about June last, I have any quantity of little plants, almost enough to fill a greenhouse another year. On previous occasions I have noticed this failure of purchased Auricula seed, which at the time I set down to some fault of our own. Now I am convinced that it must be due to the age of the bought seed, saved, doubtless, during the previous year, and distributed in the following spring by the florists.

This seems to suggest that, in order to get the best results, Auricula seed should be sown as soon as it is ripe, a rule that applies to a good many other things. After all, in a state of nature seed falls from plants when the pods arrive at maturity and burst, and either germinates at once or is kept damp in the soil until the time comes for it to start. That is Nature's habit, and it is difficult to improve upon her ways. At the same time we took a number of Heliotrope cuttings from roots that had been kept under shelter for this purpose.

On the 24th we rolled the lawn, a nice shower having fallen in the night, and the weather being quieter, mounded up the Cucumbers in the frames with rich soil, for the roots draw to the surface and require feeding; and, as they are now getting large plants, trained them to a framework of sticks. This should have been done before, but during the recent rough days we were afraid to keep the frames open so long, lest the high wind should catch their broad leaves and snap the stems. From the Peach house where they were sown we took a number of early Erfurt and early London Cauliflower plants, and, the soil being damp after the shower, pricked them out in temporary quarters near the drain ditch in the Orchard, whence they will be transplanted later on, giving the bed a liberal dressing of soot and lime to keep off slugs and snails. Also we mulched one of the borders with rotten manure, dug some vacant land, planted out a batch of Lettuces, and protected the springing Peas and seed-beds with cotton fastened to pegs, so as to keep it an inch or so above the ground.

The object of this, of course, is to persuade the sparrows that they are in presence of a snare, though even to the most dangerous-looking thread the bolder spirits among them become accustomed. Were it not for such devices whole lines of young Peas would be destroyed by these pestiferous birds, which pull them up with their strong beaks, I suppose to eat the seed. Or it may be the tender green sprouts they prefer. For the sparrow, as for the bullfinch, gardeners have no use.

By the way, I forgot to mention that my tin hawk has again succumbed to the fury of the elements. After a stronger gale than usual, I found him lying prone near the bottom of the Orchard, and torn nearly in two. However he can be soldered up, and a little later in the year set to hover gently above the Peas. Meanwhile I am inclined to think that he has served some useful purpose; at any rate, we have seen no more bullfinches, and the Pear bloom is now too forward to be hurt by them. In addition to the above tasks we pricked out into boxes some Carnations that we have grown from seed, and a lot of Leptosiphon, which is also called Gilia, for beds and edgings. This day I saw the first Asparagus heads appearing above the surface of the soil.

On the 25th we moved and reset in the bed at the bottom of the Orchard, which has been enlarged for that purpose, about a hundred plants of Aspagarus of the Improved Argenteuil variety. Last year, when I made this bed, I determined to follow the advice which some of the Evesham growers gave me, and to secure a quite fresh stock of this vegetable from abroad. I ordered a hundred and fifty plants of three-year-old stuff, but, by mistake, two hundred and fifty were sent. The extra hundred we planted temporarily in the Old kitchen garden.

On forking them up, carefully as we could, in order to break the long roots as little as possible, we found that these plants, which were just starting into life, had grown a great deal during the past year. Indeed, unless my memory is at fault, they must have quite doubled their size. To receive them we dug four trenches, one at each side and two at the top of the Orchard bed, into which we laid a good thickness of manure, covering it with soil. In this fine soil we made shallow scoops, and spreading out the roots of the plants, each in a line with those already growing there, covered them with a shovelful apiece of burnt earth from one of the heaps, and next with garden soil, so that the crowns will not be more than two inches or so beneath the surface. This has received a dressing of artificial manure.

I observe, however, that Freaks and Charles have stupidly raked a number of rough clods on to the top of these new trenches, which must either be broken up or removed. One of the great requisites in planting Asparagus is to see that the roots do not get dry during the process, which is very apt to happen. On this Wednesday, which was warm, with the usual gale, the moisture seemed to leave them almost as one looked at them, so much so that we plunged the lot, taking out each plant as it was required. I hope they will not suffer from the move, which has been undertaken earlier than usual, most experts advising April as the best month for planting Asparagus.

It is curious that this excellent and paying vegetable is so seldom—I might almost say never—grown in cottage gardens, since, if properly planted, when once established, beyond an annual manuring, it requires but little care for many years. I imagine the reason to be that the average cottager declines to wait three seasons for a crop, however profitable. For the same reason he rarely sets a fruit tree, even when he has been in the occupation of his garden for many years. After all, this is not wonderful, for who cares to sow where other men may reap. If he owned his place it might be different, though even of this I am not certain, for, as a rule, his class is not one that looks to the future.

An instance comes to my mind. I had a small tenant, who was also my servant, in whose hire was an Orchard that had been held by his family for fifty or sixty years. I made this man a present of several dozen first-class fruit trees wherewith to improve his Orchard. Five or six years later I was obliged to part with him, through his own fault, and he handed over his tenancy, by private arrangement, to another man, making at the same time a claim of £3 upon me for his labour in digging holes in which to set the trees. I gave him the £3, but not as a matter of right. He was, I remember, curiously indignant at the idea of anybody else getting the benefit of these trees, although he had received them as a gift, and lost the advantage of them through his own action.

To my astonishment I see that some of the two-year-old Ribston Pippin bushes from Belgium, which I planted last autumn, are showing for flower. So far as I can judge, the standards, and, indeed, all the Apples, promise to be well set with bloom this year. I wish they were not so early. Between the Pleasure and the Vinery gardens there is an ancient wall on the top of which grow some Mountain-Ashes, sprung from seeds lodged by birds in the crevices of the brickwork. One of these is just coming into leaf. I have watched that little tree—it is about four feet high—for over twenty years, and during all this time, although it seems quite healthy, it has not, I think, varied in size. How it lives at all is a mystery, with nothing but dry mortar for its roots to feed on.

We have been planting out young Wall-flowers, of which I am particularly fond. Ours grow very sticky and do not seem to flourish after two years, but I think nearly all the Cheiranthus tribe are, in fact, perennials, as I seem to have observed them in the same places for many seasons. Just now we have a fine show of these blooms in the garden, those which are opening in one of the beds being very large and double. I know a church tower in E. Norfolk where Wall-flowers really justify their name, for season by season, they flower in the cracks of the stone work, looking from below like gold coins hanging among the grey flints. I cannot recall any other instance of their growing thus, though it is hard to say why this tower should be particularly favoured.

On the 26th we took our stock of new summer Chrysanthemums, which for my part I prefer to any that grow under glass, from the cold frame where we have been rearing them, and set them out in a specially prepared, foot-wide border in front of the Cold orchid house, and along the face of the Warm and Cool greenhouses, planting them here among the Daffodils in such a fashion that they will make one continuous line of bloom. I obtained some roots of these from one of the growers last autumn, and by separating them and striking cuttings from others, have now a good stock, which should flower well in their season. Also we pricked off some more Lobelias, potted up our Gloxinia bulbs in a mixture of turfy soil, leaf-mould, and silver sand, and dug another trench, which we filled with rotted manure, for a sowing of Ne-plus-ultra peas.

In order to give an extra dressing to certain Apples which have been afflicted with scale and American blight in past years, we made up some wash, which, when on my travels, I found was extensively used in Kent. These are its proportions, which, of course, can be halved or quartered where a small quantity is required: Paraffin, 1 quart; salt, 1 lb.; soft soap, 1 lb.; lime, 1 bucket; water, 30 to 40 gallons. It is a preparation that may be recommended as fatal to most pests, especially scale, and a preventive of moss.

We cut the grass on the tennis-courts for the first time this year.

On this day I visited a friend who has a very fine garden in the neighbourhood. On the walls of his house are some particularly attractive creepers, among them the Garrya Elliptica, which has a leaf like an evergreen oak, and is now covered with very long catkins, and Grevillia Sulphurea, which bears a yellow flower and looks like a Juniper. This is very handsome and hardy, although, as I am informed, a slow grower. Here also the common Laurestinus is used as a wall plant with good effect. In this garden I saw Rhododendrons grown on clay, or, in some instances, in turf mould with a clay subsoil, which seemed to be doing very well. They have been planted about two years. Also there was a collection of Bamboos, throwing up fine growths, set in a shrubbery of tall trees for shelter, where I should have thought that the shade would be too much for them.

My friend has a plant of Gunnera Manicata which he imported from Ireland and established in a similar shady situation, with the object of preventing the winds from breaking its great leaves, that sometimes measure more than twelve feet round. As this species comes from the icy spaces of Southern Brazil, I can see no reason why it should not bear our Norfolk climate. That, however, will be proved in time. In the same garden there were other beautiful hardy things too numerous to mention, the Primula Rosea and the single and double Arabis looking especially pretty in the Rockery.

Here I saw some splendid tubs full of Crinum Moorei Lilies, the product, every one of them, of my old bulb of which I have spoken, and a remarkably fine and dark Amaryllis, which was grown from seed. It is a variety worth preserving.

On the 27th we pinched our Figs in the Tomato house, stopping in the shoots to the third or fourth leaf to prevent them from growing out too far and make them fruit the better. This causes a certain loss of the white, milk-like sap, but I notice that the flow dries up after a day or two. The day being favourable, we sowed a couple of pounds weight of fine grass and suckling seed on the lawn-tennis courts, strewing it most thickly over the weak places where weeds had been pulled out and the turves reset after draining. Then we scattered sand over the seed, and brushed the whole in with a broom. As a shower of rain fell at night, I think that a good proportion of these seeds should take, to the benefit of the turf.

I went over the Strawberry beds with Mason, noting where plants had failed, and arranging to supply deficiencies. Luckily, we set a few spare runners at the end of each line, so that I think we shall have enough for this purpose. Also we sticked our Pelargoniums and greenhouse Carnations.

The Daffodils are now coming out well, in addition to Golden Spur, which is in full bloom; Emperor has opened its noble golden-yellow cup, set in a perianth of primrose; and the broad Sir Watkin, with its shorter trumpet, is also in flower; but my bulbs of Glory of Leyden are still in the bud. As I observe that they do well there, I have determined to move the few varieties of Sedum, or Stonecrop, which I possess to the dry spots on the Rockery, where, between the lack of rain, the sucking of the Elm-roots below, and the shade of the leaves above, most things suffer from want of moisture.

On the 28th, when, after a few hours of calm, the south-westerly gale became more violent than usual, four lots of Iris Germanica, six plants to the lot, which I purchased at Messrs. Protheroe's sale for ten shillings, arrived, and were planted in some light, mixed soil in the Lawn-pond border. They are nice little roots, but I daresay will not flower yet. The sorts are Florentina, a silvery white; Gracchus, a canary yellow; Victorine, a free flowering white, spotted with rich blue, said to be one of the finest sorts in cultivation; and Squalens, a clouded copper. It is sad to think that so long a time must elapse before —if I am still alive—I can hope to see their flowers. But so it is in gardening. One must look forward. Here patience is the most needful quality. Nurserymen do not supply their choice things in large specimens; often these must be grown on for years—then at last comes the rich reward.

We have sown a bed of Seakale seed, setting it a few inches apart, and in lines. Here, again, one or two seasons must elapse before the crowns are large enough to bear, but of this vegetable we never seem to have enough, as it is in constant request for forcing, and afterwards the roots are practically useless, except for cuttings.

The Blackthorn is now in full bloom in the hedges, some of the bushes looking from a distance as though they were covered with the purest frosted snow. It is much earlier than usual this year; indeed, the spring is, I think, the most forward that I can remember, and if winter should come back again the results will be disastrous. All about the garden the birds are nesting, and the blue eggs of thrushes may be seen lying in their earthen cups, tokens that spring—with its promise of new life—has come indeed.

On Sunday, the 29th, I visited some friends, who have a small garden, about five miles away. In their greenhouse was a very fine plant, the only one, I think, in this neighbourhood, of Billbergia Nutans, so called, I suppose, because of the way in which the flowers hang down. It was in full bloom, and its delicate scapes drooped in every direction, ending in rose-hued bracts, from which depend the pale green, blue-edged flowers, that form a curious contrast to the stiff-looking upright foliage. I believe that this is generally supposed to be a stove-plant, but certainly it flourishes in that cold greenhouse. I begged some pieces of it, and brought them home in my pocket to strike, though perhaps I should have waited to attempt this until the plant has finished flowering.[1] Also they gave me some plants of Sweet Rocket (Hesperis Matronalis) and Evening Primrose. In this garden the sparrows were working havoc with the Pear bloom, at a stage when the bullfinches leave it alone, pulling the buds from the stalks just as they were about to expand—a melancholy sight.

Of sparrows in these counties there are no end, since the old sparrow-clubs, that flourished when farming was prosperous, have gone out of fashion. Many people seek relief by the illegal course of poisoning them with grain soaked in a preparation of arsenic. Indeed, this has been done here (not by me, nor I hope and believe by any person in my employ) during the last week, for I have found dead sparrows lying about the garden, also two greenfinches and a blackbird. Perhaps, however, the last came to his end in some other way, although I could find no signs of shot upon it, as blackbirds are not supposed to eat grain, at any rate, at this time of the year. This poisoning is a dangerous and undesirable practice, seeing that harmless birds, to say nothing of game, are sure to be destroyed by it; also I have known children made very ill by picking up and cooking poisoned sparrows. Whether it is due to such unlawful efforts on the part of some neighbour or neighbours unknown, or not, I am unable to say; at least, the sparrows have not interfered with my Pear bloom in this fashion.

Another friend has just had a sad experience. Suddenly the plants in her greenhouse began to go wrong, the leaves dropping and the flowers withering; nor, in spite of almost frantic investigation, could the source of evil be discovered. At length it was found to be an open pot of chloride of lime, which had been used for some purpose, killing worms I think, poked away under the greenhouse stage and forgotten. The powerful fumes from this compound had, without doubt, done the damage.

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[1] These cuttings have grown splendidly, and now, in February 1904, are themselves producing flowers.—H. R. H.

On this Sunday, and, indeed, on the following Monday and Tuesday also, the perpetual gales with which we are favoured this spring increased their normal fury. Such winds do much harm to Plum and other bloom in exposed situations, but, luckily, my little Pears are so protected by the tall surrounding fences and the standard Apples among which they are planted that I do not think they have taken any hurt.

On the 30th we sowed some more Spinach, and began moving the Tomatoes into their eight-inch fruiting pots, a task that was completed on the following day. The Pond border is now really very pretty. All round its inner edge the many-hued Polyanthus are in full bloom, while the slope above it is bright everywhere with the golden cups of Daffodils, amongst which a few late Crocuses still flower. On the swamp bed by the edge of the water, also, the common Marsh-marigold —King-cups we call them here—which I moved last year from the borders of the Waveney, are in full flower, a glorious sight. Altogether, I am very pleased with this little Pond garden, and congratulate myself upon my energy in having made it. I hope to do so still more when the Water-lilies and other plants come into bloom, that is, if there is then any water left for them to bloom in, for never have I known it so low at this season of the year. Only the border above will not, I fear, look so gay again after the glory of the Daffodils has departed.

On the 31st I found my little patch of Fritillary Meleagris, which grows in a very sheltered spot under the south wall of the house, coming into bloom. Wonderfully pretty they are with their drooping, tesselated flowers. About fourteen years ago these bulbs were given to me out of a cottage garden by an old lady, now long dead. Then nearly half of them were white, but by degrees they have all reverted to the original type. Last year, if I remember right, there was but one "alba," and this season I see none at all. On this day I found the first queen wasp taking its walks abroad upon the leaves of the Christmas Roses, and slew it with my spud. I think that it is not common to see them until the end of April, another testimony to the mildness of the spring.

Old Freaks has been engaged in painting certain of the Apples and Pears that have suffered from scale in the past, with the Kentish mixture. One tree, however, he had to leave till after sundown, as it grows on a wall near to where the beehive stands, and of bees, like most country people, he is afraid. We potted some Verbenas and Centaureas for bedding purposes in small "sixty" pots, and set a quantity of little Onion bulbs in the Orchard. Here, too, on the following day we planted more early Potatoes, which can be got rid of in time to allow of our taking an autumn and winter crop on the same ground.

APRIL

On the Old lawn border there is a really fine plant of coloured Primrose in bloom, very round and shapely, and carrying at least a hundred flowers. It is a striking and lovely object, and the same may be said of some of the over-year Polyanthus that edge the flower-bed in front of the Cold orchid house. On the Old Vinery border the Narcissi are now a beautiful sight. The lines of Empress, perhaps the best of the bi-colours, with its yellow trumpet and white surrounding petals, are open; Emperor is in full bloom, Barri Conspicuus coming on, Golden Spur still flowering, but a little past its best, Sir Watkin (not many of these) out, with its noble chalice cup, on the centre oval bed, and my one line of Glory of Leyden just expanding.

At present I confess that with these last I am a little disappointed, as the blooms do not look so big as those which I saw last year at the Norwich Show. Perhaps they will improve. I do not remember whether I said that I bought six of these bulbs at eighteenpence a-piece, and separated the doubles, so that in all I planted twelve, of which eight are flowering, one with two blooms. On the other hand, the Emperors, which I obtained from Mr. Disbrowe, a gentleman who has taken up bulb-culture at Bennington, in Lincolnshire, where I inspected his farm when making my tour of England, are really magnificent. None of the bulbs have less than two flowers, the majority three, and a few of them four. Certainly this speaks well for the possibilites of Narcissus-culture in England. Emperor, Empress, Sir Watkin, and Glory of Leyden can all be planted with advantage on one bed, as they seem to bloom almost simultaneously, but in future I intend to give the earlier Golden Spur a place to itself.

On this day we administered to the Strawberries in the Stable garden a liberal dressing of soot, which we buy from the sweep at sixpence a bushel (manufactured, I imagine, in our own chimneys, but his perquisite). It keeps away the slugs, and is also an excellent manure. The effects at first are unsightly, but, as it happened, a shower of rain came that washed it off the leaves.

The mice have played mischief with the Broad-beans in the Orchard; all about lie the withered tops of the plantlings destroyed by them, their habit being to dig up the seed and devour it. In despair, as we are growing more of this vegetable, I procured a tinful of paraffin and soaked the seed, in the hope that this oil flavouring will disgust these thieves. I fear, however, that it may wear off before they begin upon them. Also we have dibbled in more Beans in place of those destroyed. At best this will make an uneven crop, but that seems better than leaving so many empty gaps.

A friend has sent me a root of Eryngium (amethystinum, I think), which I admired in his garden last year, that I have divided and placed on the stable border. I have one plant of it already, from which I saved some seed last autumn, that is now coming up nicely in the hotbed. These Eryngiums of various kinds are singularly effective objects in a garden. They look like thistles, but do not, I think, belong to this genus.

On the 2nd we were engaged in outwitting my natural enemies, the fowls, to insure which end I grudge no reasonable expense. In the present instance it has involved the purchase of a hundred yards of coarse wire-netting, over three feet in depth, Near the kitchen door is a patch of ground where once stood a group of great Elms, which I cut down because they were unsafe, and planted with Cypresses, white Lilacs, Laburnums, a hybrid Magnolia—a very beautiful bush—and other shrubs. Also there is a self-sown Holly tree, now of a good size, but which I remember quite small, that at this date is still thick with scarlet berries. The retriever dog, Bob, has his habitation beneath it, which may account for the birds not having eaten the berries long ago.

For the fowls, however, Bob's food trough is an irresistible attraction, and being a hound of virtuous nature and forbearing mind (except where rabbits are concerned), he never does more than bark at them when they come in their multitudes to steal, instead of dragging their tails out, like Bustle, the spaniel, as I heartily wish that he would do. The result is that they trample down the Tulips, Daffodils and Spanish Iris planted between the shrubs, dig holes in the ground to dust themselves, especially at the base of the wall, where it is warm and sunny, and generally make the whole place a reproach, full of evil odours. Now, however, I have inclosed it all with wire fixed to the iron railings, and raised about an inch above the top bar, so that it will cut their feet if they try to perch thereon. Hitherto they have been in the habit of spending about eight hours out of every twenty-four in this shrubbery, but my turn has come, and it is with real enjoyment that I see them arrive, glare, chuckle in their silly fashion as they look at the unattainable food trough, and at length depart, disappointed, to scratch elsewhere.

How hateful a creature is a fowl!—at any rate, to the gardener—and how colossal is its obstinacy, that only wire-netting can defeat.

On the 3rd and 4th, amongst other things, we removed the Violets which have bloomed in the frames—very well this year—and made a bed of them under the shade of the fence at the top of the Orchard, took some Dahlia cuttings from the roots which are starting in the Tomato house, where they are laid in a little soil, so as to get the warmth of the pipes, pricked out Celery into boxes, and Brussels-sprouts into a prepared bed in the Orchard. Also the farm carts brought us six or eight loads of rough gravel from my own pit, to make a foundation for the Orchard roadway by the drain ditch, which, the weather being rainy, Knowles was engaged in spreading, cracking the larger stones with a hammer. Further, we washed the Masdevallia pots in the Cold orchid house, laid up some manure for garden crops, and wheeled more on to the land for Potatoes. On the Saturday afternoon we had a very heavy storm of rain, more than a quarter of an inch falling in a short time, which I am glad to say has caused the drains to work a little, and brought some water into the new pond.

On one of these days I was away from home, stopping at Colne Engaine, a very pretty and undulating country in Essex. Here a lady kindly showed me over a farm of two hundred and fifty acres, which her father owns and she manages, not figuratively, but in fact. Fifteen acres of the land is under fruit, an area to which she is adding every year by grafting a number of Apples, &c. She grows a breadth of Black-currants, but here, as almost everywhere in England, I was sorry to find that scourge, Big-bud, rampant. Indeed, it had been found necessary to pull up many of the bushes and burn them, although one young plantation seems as yet to be fairly free. Even there, however, I found a few, and, I confess, have my fears for its future.

Indeed, unless some preventive should be discovered, or a new immune variety of the fruit is reared, I am inclined to think that this pest will make the cultivation of Black-currants in England almost impossible, as the habit of the mite of multiplying itself in the heart of the buds renders it impervious to any known insecticide. This is the more to be deplored since Black-currants command a better price than any other fruit.[1]

This farm, with its able and intelligent manager, who knows every detail of its working, and even pays the men herself; its clean dairy, where a lady pupil with a cheerful countenance was cleansing the place after butter-making; its fruit Orchards; its fowls fattening in coops; and its charming homestead, was indeed a pleasant place to visit. Why, I wonder, do not more ladies learn the practical management of land, to which, I am sure, many of them are quite as competent, indeed, more so, than the ordinary hide-bound, tenant-farmer. But that is a subject upon which I must not enter here.

Women are, I am glad to say, taking to gardening in increasing numbers, and can receive education in that art at various colleges. Of these I have only heard one complaint, that there sometimes the strength of growing girls is overstrained by setting them to dig and other heavy tasks. This is quite unnecessary, as a man at half-a-crown a day will do more sod-lifting than any three of them ought to attempt. It is better that they should confine themselves to the higher walks of the profession, in which there is ample room for skill and intelligence.

In the course of my Sunday afternoon stroll round the garden on April 5 I observed that the bark had at last healed upon the large lawn Beech, from which, in the year 1880 or 1881, I sawed a bough because it projected among those of its neighbour, the copper Beech hard by. Since then, year by year, I have watched the new bark creeping over the wound, very slowly indeed, but surely, and marvelled at the mysterious way in which even a tree, that we think so senseless, can repair the damage done to it by the hand of man. Now it is finished, and the wound, given two-and-twenty years ago, has disappeared beneath a new skin of smooth bark. But the scar will remain as long as the tree does. This is the Beech, by the way, that is by far the earliest of any in the garden, which shows how individual are the constitutions of trees. Without any particular advantages of position, it always breaks into leaf a week or so before its fellows.

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[1] A friend who has a fruit farm in Herefordshire, which I have recently inspected, has planted a quantity of Black-currants, known as the French variety, that so far have proved quite immune from Big-bud.—H. R. H. 1904.

Four or five years ago I read in some book that a lady who died early in the last century had set her initials in Daffodils in her garden, where they still flourish and can be clearly read. Imitating her example, I cut mine upon the bank of the Sunk path, removing the clay, filling in with good soil, and planting a number of Narcissus bulbs of the Incomparabilis section. They are blooming just now and look very pretty, but I do not think that this variety increases much in the grass, at any rate in such a situation. If I wanted my initials to last as long as those of the lady I have mentioned, I should have employed the old double Daffodil, as I have no doubt that she did.

The Yew fence, which I planted many years back upon the bank that borders the drive, straggles sadly where it is overshadowed by the Beeches, the most poisonous of all trees to anything which grows beneath them. Yet thin and untidy as it is, it serves a useful purpose both as a wind break and to screen the old croquet-lawn from the view of persons coming up the drive, therefore I do not like to cut it down, but must content myself with clipping, in the hope that it may thicken out in time. This bank is covered with Primroses—a really beautiful sight, and under the trees beyond many Narcissi are in bloom. Among the Laurel bushes at the back of the Elm-tree bed, and in that bed itself, plants of Honesty (Lunaria) grow wild. They are in flower now, and their tall purple spikes are very effective against the green of the Laurel leaves. I do not think that I ever noticed before how beautiful is this common plant.

In the Orchard many of the little Pears are a sight to see, some being perfect pyramids of white bloom. But I fear me that there is still much winter ahead of us, in which case they are sure to suffer for their precocity. Six or eight years ago I sowed a corner in the New kitchen garden with Dandelion, of which, however, I abandoned the cultivation subsequently, as even when its leaves were blanched, I found that they made salads taste more bitter than was to the liking of most people. So the Dandelion was dug up, and since then the bed has been thoroughly cultivated in the usual course. Yet such is the persistence and vitality of these plants—only to be outpassed, I think, by that of Horseradish—that I see quite a number of them reappearing in the familiar spot, advertising their advent by their brilliant yellow blooms.

On the 6th we made sundry sowings, especially of Radish and Lettuce; transplanted some annuals, and cut and rolled the tennis-courts. Also, now that the fowls have been excluded, we were forking between the bushes in the dog-kennel patch with a view to sowing Sweet-williams, which, however, will not bloom this year, Poppies, and other hardy flowers to brighten up the place. There are many things that will do well even among shrubs and look pretty in their season—provided, of course, that fowls can be kept away from them. The mice upon the Pond border are becoming a perfect pest, trap them as we will. So far as I can observe, however, they only attack the Crocus bulbs, of which they have destroyed a considerable number.

Here, on the 7th, Mason sowed a quantity of annual flowers, using the point of a wooden label for that purpose. These will come on amongst the foliage of the bulbs, and die away in the winter, so as not to interfere with the Daffodils and Tulips another spring. Also we sowed some Asters, pricked off more Celery, and planted a batch of second-early Potatoes in the Orchard. Among the grass of the Lawn bank I found a very beautiful Polyanthus of the Primrose section in bloom. The flowers are so large, well shaped and marked, with an intense yellow eye, that we have fertilised them, although it is very probable that the bees have been before us with this operation. However, another head is being thrown up, and to make sure of its safety I have inclosed the whole plant in a net of fine gauze. To me the variety seems worthy of propagation.

But little water has come into the new pond, about twenty inches in all, and unless we get some real wet, of which we have had none this year, I begin to fear that it will not fill up before the summer. Therefore, I have been searching for means to augment the supply, which at present depends upon what can be gathered from the drains of about five acres of the Back lawn. Alongside this lawn, however, lies another field, that I laid down in grass some nine years ago, the water from which at present runs to waste. Careful investigation shows me that by putting a couple of clay dams in the bottom ditch, and laying a drain from this ditch across the corner of the stackyard to the pond, a distance of about a hundred yards, I can collect the surface water off three and a half acres more land, by the help of which one, or, at most two, days' good rain should, I think, fill the pond to overflowing.

The fall will be very little, not six inches in all, if so much. Still, after studying the matter, we believe that it will prove sufficient. The question is, what pipes should be used. The four-inch socketed and glazed pipes cost ninepence each, but those that are unglazed and without sockets of the same diameter, though not quite so long, can be had for fourpence at the Hedenham Kiln. These should be ample to carry the water, so I am buying two hundred of them, and putting a man upon the job. Nothing is more important to a house and garden than a good supply of clean pond water, and to secure this is worth a little trouble and expense.

On the 8th the Potato planting went on in the Orchard; also we cleared a piece of land there of Broccoli plants, dug it for Peas, planted out our Fuchsias, and trenched the south House border for Cannas, which have been wintering in the greenhouse. I find that some of my little collection of Saxifrages were planted in too sunny a position, and have arranged to move them to where there is more shade, though to do this we shall in some instances have to wait until they have flowered. I bought last year two plants of Sax. Cotyledon and one of Sax. Cotyledon pyramidalis, a rather different sort, with silvery foliage, which has not yet flowered. The two Cotyledons, however, threw up beautiful spikes of bloom, and then, as though exhausted by this noble effort, promptly died.

As I know of no others of this variety in the neighbourhood, I cannot say for certain whether this is their habit. Before they deceased, however, after the fashion of the common Houseleek, to which I suppose they are allied, they threw out a number of offshoots, which have rooted, and are now nice little plants. Although I cannot expect that these will flower this year, I propose to move them and set them in a line at the edge of a half-shaded border. The Pyramidalis, which did not flower, remains in the best of health, but has produced no offshoots.

On this morning I saw a garden tragedy. It had been settled that the hive of bees must be moved to the Filbert border at the end of the Stable garden, where, being out of the way, they would cease to alarm the men, and that this should be done at night. As it was very cold and stormy, and he wished to attend to a patch of Strawberries close by, Mason seems to have thought that the operation could be carried out equally well in the early morning, and, with the assistance of Bedingfield, carted away the wooden hive to its new situation. In walking through the garden I noticed that it had gone, and that round the spot a number of distracted bees were buzzing. Evidently these poor little creatures had already left the hive at the moment of removal, and were now wildly searching for their vanished home. What agonies they must have suffered to find it gone and themselves left houseless on the bitter world!

Bees, which in most ways are endowed with such marvellous intelligence, in others seem singularly stupid, and although their hive was standing within forty yards, I greatly doubt if they ever discovered it. At least, on the following morning a few were still flying round and round its former site. One would have thought that other members of their countless community, going about the business of the day, must have met and led them home, but this does not appear to have been the case, so I suppose that they perished of cold and hunger, like children lost in a wilderness. One may hope that nature is merciful to them, and that they do not suffer so much as would the children in like circumstances. Still, am I not right in calling it a tragedy? How many there are of these in this world, which from foundation stone to pinnacle is but a house of Death, all of whose inhabitants, great and small, live by death until themselves they die.

A while ago, in the Warm greenhouse, I saw a bumble bee become emmeshed in a spider's web. The spider, not a very large one, approached swiftly, and from a safe distance dabbed at it continually with its feet, doubtless to entangle it still further, while the great bee struggled furiously, all the while making a deep, humming noise. I thought that it must break out; indeed, it seemed about to do so, when suddenly the spider leapt at its head, which it appeared to grip with its jaws. There it hung as a bull-dog hangs, while the bee struggled with frightful energy, straining its bound feet and elongating its thick body as though to reach its tormentor with its tail. Suddenly, without any previous relaxation of its efforts, it turned over and was dead, the jaws of the spider having doubtless reached its brain or spinal cord—if it has one.

Instantly the spider let go, and began to tie up the legs of the corpse. , Then, letting out a silken cord here and tightening one there, by degrees it dragged the bulk, which must have been four times as heavy as itself, further up into the net. On the following morning I found it still engaged in wrapping the remains of its captive with the thread which it spun out of its body, perhaps to preserve them for winter food. I noticed that this bold and ferocious insect had a bag of eggs in its nest. A cruel business truly, although I do not suppose that it struck the spider, who had its larder to fill and its young to provide for, in the same light.

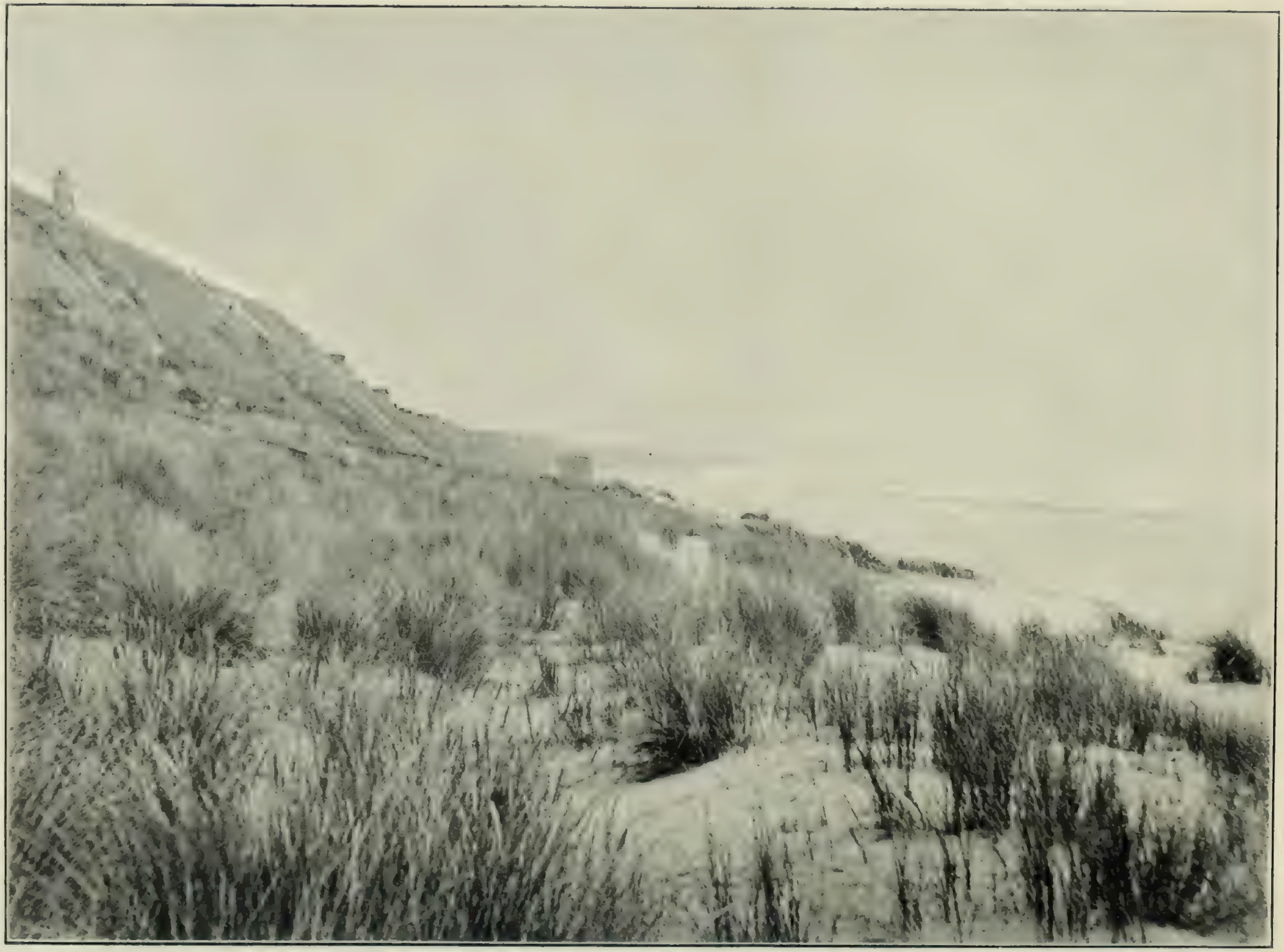
The wind has gone round to the north, whence it blows with great violence and bitterly cold. Now it is that the tall fences which I have grown up round the Orchard show their value. The gale rushing against them has, I see, torn off hundreds of their tender, green leaves, which lie scattered upon the Asparagus bed. But, meanwhile, these are serving their purpose in protecting the bloom of the little Pear trees, that scarcely stir in their sheltered beds.

I have cut one of my Glory of Leyden Daffodils and placed it in a specimen glass on my desk, where its noble shape and size can be appreciated. How much more beautiful than any jewel does it appear there, springing from its cluster of green foliage.

Good Friday, which was a holiday in the garden, I spent at Kessingland. On the Thursday when I left home the men were making another sowing of winter Greens and of Chervil for salads; also in sticking Peas and manuring land for early Cauliflowers. On this day, too, we cut our first Cucumbers from the frames.

Although it is hard on the edge of the sea, I found things more forward at Kessingland than at Ditchingham, sixteen miles away. Thus, a few Potatoes were well above the ground; perhaps Bayfield, my man there, knowing that there is little frost to fear so close to the ocean, planted them early. Once again I was struck by the extraordinary fine flavour of the Kessingland vegetables—I do not think I ever ate a better-tasted Cauliflower than was sent up for my dinner. The Marum, on the beach, although still rusty, is beginning to grow. This, I notice again, seems to be a very slow plant to raise from seed; indeed, some that I sowed quite four years since is only now beginning to make nice little clumps, and, unless my observation is at fault, I think the seed often lies a year in the ground or sand before it germinates. By far the quickest way to propagate it is by dividing the old roots and setting them in tufts a foot or two apart. Meanwhile this Marum continues to gather sand, and our beach to grow.

I wonder how many tens of thousands of pounds the inhabitants of the south end of Lowestoft would give for my two hundred and fifty yards of beach frontage to-day? Poor people! their case is indeed sad, who must stand helpless and watch property of incalculable value being threatened, and, indeed, destroyed by the remorseless ocean. The sight there after the recent gales was one of the most melancholy that I ever saw; sea-wall smashed up, cliff crumbling, and houses being demolished. Where and how can it be stopped without the expenditure of sums of money, which, in addition to the thousands that have already been wasted, are more than the town can bear? I have my own ideas upon the subject but this is not the place to state them.



MARUM GRASS AND SAND THEREBY ACCUMULATED AT FOOT OF CLIFF,
KESSINGLAND GRANGE

Meanwhile, what is being lost by Lowestoft we seem to gain at Kessingland, at any rate for the present.

On the Saturday after my return I found that the hybrid Magnolia bush in the little Dog-kennel plantation had burst into bloom, notwithstanding the bitter weather. Its hundreds of cup-like flowers are truly beautiful to see, and fill the air with fragrance. I am sorry to say that I have lost the name of this Magnolia, which I planted with some other species about fifteen years ago after seeing them in bloom at Kew. The rest died, but this kind has thriven, and is a great addition to the garden. I have none of the ordinary Magnolias on the house, where I lack room to set them. To see these in their glory, however, one must visit Madeira, where walks are lined with great, glossy-leaved trees, and white with perfect bloom.

During the last nine days—I write on April 20—we have experienced quite the bitterest weather that I ever remember at this time of year. On the 16th and 17th the minimum readings of the thermometer were 27 degrees Fahrenheit, and on other days they stood but little higher. At Clare, a correspondent in the local paper states that there were nine degrees of frost on the 17th, and it is there said that no such cold has been known at this season since Easter Day, 1816. Certainly it has been very sharp, the more so as the frost was accompanied by raging north and north-westerly gales and frequent, driving snowstorms. Yet the total fall of moisture has not been high; at least, my rain gauge shows it to be under one inch.

The effects upon vegetation are lamentable. The beautiful Magnolia bush, of which I spoke a few lines back, that should have remained a show for weeks, is now a mass of brown and rotting flowers. The Daffodils are much injured, and some of them broken off; the sturdy yellow Doronicums are shorn of their petals, and even the hardy Primroses blackened. But what will be the effect upon the early fruit? Disastrous, I should imagine, at least, in the south of England, and in all exposed places where Plums, Pears, and Cherries are in flower, especially as the frosts are accompanied by wet. Strangely enough, I cannot see, however, that we have taken much harm, and my little Pears would have suffered more had the cold snap come a week earlier. As it is, many of them were already set, and even the others do not seem to have dropped their injured blooms. But of the facts of the case we shall learn more later.

I had but one Apple in flower, much before the usual date—a Red Astrachan. Notwithstanding the shelter of the tall Orchard hedges, it is much damaged on the windward side, but the rest of the tree will, I hope, bear some fruit. I am sure that apple growers in the Eastern Counties would do well to lay down two rules and cling to them: only to plant in sheltered situations, with a southern or western aspect, and such sorts as flower late—the invaluable Bramley's Seedling, for instance.

During the week I saw two sights each of which, though they were very different, struck me much. The first was that of a bank by a roadside at Bedingham, where I have a farm. On it early Cowslips were in flower, and with them Primroses in their hosts, and Violets blue and white. In their company sprang the young Meadow-sweet, with its pretty crinkled leaf, the delicate Sheeps-Parsley, and Lords and Ladies, broad and green. Among the roots of the ancient Hawthorn fence, cut down last year by order of the road surveyor, appeared Plants of Polypodium fern, while up the rough-brown stems crept tendrils of veined Ivy. Still water lay in the bottom of the ditch, along which a great bumble bee was humming, sheltered from the wind, and on its surface, in an interwoven pattern, were reflected the young, green-clad shoots of the fence and the white sprays of Blackthorn bloom. It was a pretty picture, at which one might have gazed for long, and always found something fresh to catch the eye and interest the mind—a humble piece of nature's gardening, yet full of a thousand charms and details.

The other scene was very different, and, by contrast, grand. On the road between the village of Flixton and the town of Bungay stands a noble avenue of Elms, which are somewhat apt to shed their boughs with very little warning. I passed down it just as the weather began to storm, and stopped to consider the strangely beautiful effect of the long aisle of countless boughs outlined in an infinite tracery against the blue-black, pregnant sky. High above, the soaring, naked limbs were thrown in bold relief upon this ominous background of unbroken gloom, but below all was different. Here in the shelter, a multitude of twigs and branches were already tipped with green, and the sinking sun, breaking from beneath the fierce, fire-fringed edge of the western clouds, steeped them in steady, golden light, intensified by the black canopy above. Then to the left stretched the peaceful green width of the marshes which run down to the river's edge, while to the right rose the steep slopes of clover and of naked, purple plough.

It has been but a poor time for gardening, but in the beginning of the week we dug a good deal of land for Beet and other things, cleaned the Rockery of weeds, sticked some more of our Peas, and planted another lot of Artichokes. Also we trimmed up some of the grass borders of the drive, a needful task, for these always encroach upon the gravel, except where they are trodden away by feet intent upon cutting corners. Here it proved necessary to relay them with fresh turf lifted from the stackyard, which we placed as neatly as we could, getting the edges well together, sanding it over to fill up the cracks, and protecting the whole with wire-netting.

Also we made more sowings of hardy annuals, and got forward with the construction of the walks in the

Orchard by the aid of a few more loads of rough gravel, which I have again persuaded the farm to cart from my own pit. There is not enough of it, and, as it is doubtful when we shall get any more, we have been utilising a fresh collection of old tins, broken-up Apollonaris bottles, rough clinkers, shattered glass, and some barrow-loads of stones collected off the Front and Back lawns, as a foundation. Now, at any rate, one can walk about the place without subsequently scraping several pounds of clay from each foot. Further, we have moved some of the Saxifrages to their new quarters, and in the same bed replanted my three Osmunda Regalis ferns.

These, as I think I have said, I obtained from Devonshire last spring, and tried both in the Pond-border in the sun, and in the Elm-tree bed in the shade, in either instance with very poor success. Indeed I thought that they had expired altogether, but as I see that they are throwing up fronds, I have moved them into peaty soil on the new Fern border, where their position will be half shaded, and they can be kept constantly supplied with water from the Kitchen-garden pond. I hope that they may flourish there, at least, to a certain extent, for they are noble objects.

During this bad weather we have also done some work in the houses. For instance, the Cool orchid house has been gone over, and the dead or fading flowers of the Cœlogynes and Cypripediums removed, &c., with the result that the place looks a great deal more tidy, although its beauty is over for the year.

In the Fig house we thinned out the side shoots from the Tomatoes, and in the greenhouse re-potted some Tropæolum tubers and certain Primulas, and pricked off ten-week Stocks into boxes. Likewise, we sowed a few outdoor Cucumbers and Perfection Tomatoes.

The great and most anxious enterprise of the week, however, has been the laying a new drain from the field I have described to the Kitchen-garden pond, in which, fearing a flood down the trench (unnecessarily as it has proved), I sent Freaks and Knowles to assist the man to whom the job was put out. Many an icy half-hour have I spent over it in the midst of snowstorms, for the matter proved one that required very delicate handling. The fall from the bottom of the ditch to the pond, a hundred yards or so away, has been found to be even more trifling than I thought, and the depth to which the trench must be dug out considerable in places. Moreover, owing to the droughts of recent years, the clay at the bottom was as hard as iron and quite dry. However, we got the cut made at last, and the local bricklayer arrived to lay the drain, when it was found that, owing to the roots of a large ash and those of an old fence, which in their eager search for moisture would certainly disturb open pipes, it was necessary for the first five-and-twenty yards to employ socketed and glazed pipes, and to set them in cement.

After this, there being no more trees to pass, although we had a hard business in cutting through the stump and roots of one—I forget whether it was an Elm or Ash—which blew down eight or ten years ago, we employed the unglazed open pipes, laying them from an eighth to a sixteenth of an inch apart, so as to take any surface water that might reach them, and keeping the spirit level going on every length to secure a shade of a fall from one to the other. Further, we carted a couple of loads of sandy loam, which we spread under the pipes upon the clay, in order to provide a perfectly level bed and to avoid displacement by the subsequent expansion or contraction of that material. At about half distance we came across one of the "leads" of the Back lawn which I laid a dozen years or so ago, and connected it with the drain by means of a jointed pipe.

At length the whole thing was done, and having placed pieces of broken tile over the junction of each pair of pipes to keep the soil from silting into them in the course of years, and fixed them all into position with lumps of clay, we filled in the drain very carefully, arranging the last pipe so that it projects a foot or more, in order to prevent the washing away of the wall of the pond. This pipe, I was rejoiced to find, came out only a few inches below the level of the overflow. After this we dammed the supply ditch to hold the water from escaping down another field, and are now engaged in cleaning out and levelling the same, to provide an even fall.

So far everything seems very satisfactory indeed, except that Knowles, in ramming clay behind the new key-heading in the ditch in which the drain begins, started all the half-set bricks out of place, which will involve their relaying, or at least, a face of cement.

Presently, in a convenient manner, the snow set the field drains working and filled the ditch with water. All the time that I could spare, both before and after church on Sunday, did I spend upon that key-heading, dropping little bits of straw and leaf into the pool in front of the grating, till at length I assured myself that very slowly, almost imperceptibly indeed, they were being drawn through it into the drain, thereby proving to me that there was no mistake as to the fall. Having satisfied myself upon this point, I adjourned to the pond and fixed my eyes upon the end of the pipe, waiting to see the water flow. That is two days ago, and I have been waiting ever since, for the outflow pipe is still as dry as a lime-kiln.

I should imagine that a considerable quantity of water—say a couple of thousand gallons or more—must have gone into one end of that drain, but as yet no single drop has appeared at the other. This is a state of affairs which, I admit, has filled me with doubt, I might even say with depression, since, if after spending so much thought, time, labour, and money upon this drain, it refuses to work——! Reflection showed me, however, that both the pipes themselves and the clay in which they are laid being so dry, it is obvious that they will absorb an enormous amount of fluid before there is any to spare for the ultimate pond. Much relieved in my mind, I hastened to consult old Reeve, one of my most experienced farm hands, and other people who understand the ways of drains, and was glad to be assured that this hypothesis tallied with their long and varied experience. They said "she" that is, the drain, "is a-sucking of it up. When she's full, she'll give it out, unless a head of water comes first and forces her."

I hope that this is so, very earnestly, but until "she" is full, or that head of water comes, the point remains unproved. It is plain, indeed, that as the water goes in, and the pipe is laid in an impermeable clay trench, at some time or other it must flow out, or that part of the Back lawn will become a swamp, of which it shows no sign at present.

On the one bright morning we had last week the garden looked very gay and sunny, notwithstanding the cold east wind. Particularly charming seemed the Elm-tree border, decorated with its yellow Doronicums, many-coloured Polyanthus, outdoor Auriculas, almost my favourite among spring flowers, and purple spikes of Honesty. The host of Daffodils, too, upon the Vinery border were swaying in the wind, so that, looking at them, Wordsworth's lines came into my mind:

> "And then my heart with pleasure fills,
> And dances with the Daffodils."

Poor Daffodils! Within an hour their heads were being danced off in a blizzard!

On the last two days of the week, amongst other things, we pinched out the surplus shoots on the trees in the Peach house and thinned the fruit, of which a very heavy crop has set. Also we potted up some Fuchsia cuttings, pricked off more annuals, and turned out the Primulas whereof the beauty was done.

From my dressing-room window I can see the study and kitchen roof, and recently have several times made myself late by pausing in my toilet to watch a pair of starlings which are nesting under one of the tiles of the eave. They arrive, generally singly, and, sitting on the ridge of the roof, look round them cautiously, as though it were not patent to all the house where they have made their nest.

Particularly do they look at me through the window, a white-draped object that fills them with suspicion. Then I draw to one side, and the bird on duty flies to the gutter, and, after one hurried glance round, vanishes beneath the tile. What its business is inside I do not know, for I think that the nest is finished. At any rate, it does not stop long, for presently its bright shape appears again, and off it flies, sometimes carrying away a bit of dirt in its beak. The young can scarcely be hatched as yet, for if they were the parents would bring them food. Possibly what I take for dirt are lumps of mortar, which the starlings are removing to make more room for their nest, and thereby preparing future work for the bricklayer. The other day, too, I was much interested in watching a robin out of the dining-room window. It collected food that had been put upon a step close by, and when its beak was full, did not fly away, but waited. Presently another robin arrived, a full-grown bird, I presume its mate, which it fed with the food. Now why did it do this? Was it because Mrs. Robin was so occupied with domestic cares, nest-building or sitting, that she had no time to forage for herself?

Pansies and Violas cannot need much support. In a crack of the old containing-wall of the Vinery border two plants have established themselves, and are blooming there quite as freely as their companions in the rich soil of the neighbouring bed. The Polyanthus still make a brave show. How, I wonder, do the flowers bear these cyclonic snowstorms and bitter frosts? From force of habit, I presume; being accustomed to bloom at this season, bloom they will, whatever the weather.

I have been watching the behaviour of my three plants of Tropæolum Speciosum, or Flame flower, which grow in the Elm-tree garden. They are designed to climb up the Yew fence, and in order to enable them to do this branching twigs have been set near them to serve as ladders. It is very curious to see how the tender, green tendrils search out these twigs and wrap themselves round them. The tendril that was an inch or two away one night may be found next morning embracing its desired twig. Peas, Runner-beans, and all climbing plants behave in the same way, just as though they were endowed with reason. And who will say that they are not?

Who taught the Sarracenias to bait their fly-catching apparatus with honey? Who told the night-blooming flowers that they must cultivate a perfume, and those that open by day that they must be brilliant-hued in order to attract the insects necessary to the reproduction of their race? How did the Crocus learn to store up in its corms food that next year will be bright flowers? Surely there are few of those things needful to life and to its continuance in future generations which a man accomplishes by reason and experience that a plant does not do by instinct, if instinct it be. Or have they, perchance, an intelligence of their own? At times I have thought so.

On this day, Monday the 20th, the weather has been milder, but everything in the garden is a melancholy sight. The early Potatoes under the wall are cut down by the frost, and the Doronicums and other flowers seem in little better case. Still, the snow having melted, we were able to mow the Lawn and tennis courts. Also we top-dressed the Cucumbers and tied the shoots of the fruit-trees in the Peach house to their wire supports.

On Tuesday the 21st, we moved out the bedding plants that had been sheltering in the Tomato house to make room for the Tomatoes themselves, which are now arranged there in neat rows of pots. Also we sticked some of the early Peas, and protected others that were just appearing above ground against the ravages of the sparrows, using our wire guards for this purpose, and, when these were exhausted, black cotton, strained from little sticks, at a height of about two inches above the ground. Our sparrows, however, are not greatly affected by cotton.

On this day Mason and I selected the Orchids that were to go to the Norwich Show, a very anxious business, since it involves many considerations. Thus, some of the plants may be too big to carry in the cart, and others too delicate to risk, even with the most careful packing, in these bitter north-east winds. Others, again, are not quite out, and others going over, and must, therefore, be rejected. Moreover, it is unfortunate —for those who grow Orchids—that these shows are fixed to suit very different classes of flowers; in this instance, Daffodils. Thus, my Cœlogynes, Cypripediums Insigne and their crosses, which would have made a beautiful display on the bench, are now quite over; indeed, I have scarcely a single plant of either left in a condition fit to stage. My exhibit, therefore, must be made up out of odds and ends.

We determined to enter for all the classes, the Single Plant, the Three Plants, and the Six Plants; also to send a little extra collection. After much consultation, a fine specimen of Dendrobium Thyrsiflorum, bearing about ten or eleven trusses of its glorious blooms (I had a better one, but, alas! it is over), was chosen to represent Ditchingham in the Single Plant competition. For the Three Plants, a fine Cymbidium Lowianum, but not the largest, which was too heavy; a specimen plant of Cattleya Amethystina, with many flowers;

and a well-grown Vanda Suavis, with two spikes appearing among its arching leaves, were set aside as the most suitable. The Six Plant lot was made up of the following: A good Vanda Tricolor, a Dendrobium Jamesianum covered with lovely white flowers, a sweet-scented Cattleya Shröderæ with two trusses, a many-bloomed red Masdevallia (I think it is called Militaris), a Cattleya Citrina, from which hung several of its rich, wax-like, lemon-scented blooms, and a beautiful Miltonia Candida. The extra exhibit included, amongst others, two Cypripediums Lathamianum; one ditto Boxallii, which blooms later than the Insigne class and is a wonderful laster; a Vanda Denisoniana, the only pure white Vanda known; an Aërides Odoratum; and a Phalænopsis, which was sent me from Japan, but grew, I believe, in Formosa, a lovely, virginal-looking thing.

Nearly all the next day was occupied in packing the plants in their boxes, a very delicate operation, as every pot must be sticked and each flower protected with cotton wool, after which the whole box has to be covered in with matting, tied over arched rods. The process is rendered more troublesome by the fact that at this time of the year it must be carried out in the somewhat confined space of the central walk in the Cool orchid house.

Indeed, the worst of these shows is that, one way and another, they take up a great deal of time, especially when, as in our case, a drive to Norwich, thirteen miles away and back again, is involved. Still, I like to send to them if I can, as a few Orchids are an acceptable feature on the benches, and gardeners, being human, appreciate the *kudos* they get if successful, to say nothing of the prize money, which, according to custom, or at any rate to my custom, they take, after deducting the expenses of putting up the pony and their meals. Further, they have an opportunity of seeing what other people can do and of studying the various exhibits.

After inspecting this packing up, whilst walking down the stable drive I noticed a curious thing. About six years ago I planted along the railings on either side two rows of Tulips, that on the left being of a yellow variety, and that to the right of a red. Now, of the yellow line but a single flower is left, and this no longer yellow, but white, lined with pink, whereas of the red the vast majority are still flourishing, although they have never been relifted. I should think that there are more than a hundred of them in bloom or coming out. Why, I wonder, should the yellow sort vanish and the red prove permanent, or comparatively so?

This evening I had a shock. Hunting up my Flower Show tickets for to-morrow, I found that they were dated April 25, not the 23rd, which we had believed to be the day. In great agitation, for the mistake meant that a day had been wasted and all the Orchids must be unpacked again, I started off down to Mason's cottage and showed him the tickets, which, as he did the packing, upset him even more than it had me. However, the evidence was not to be shaken, and we parted despondently. Half an hour later he appeared, having discovered that we had both made a trifling mistake. The packet of tickets was an old one left over from the year 1902!

On the following day I visited the Show, in St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, a splendid place for the purpose. Here I found Mason and Charles with beaming countenances, for we had taken all the first prizes for Orchids, including a special one for the extra exhibit, and a second for something else, I forget what, but not an Orchid. Truth compels me to add, however, that there were few other competitors in these classes. When I began to show Orchids some years ago several Norfolk horticulturists did likewise, but as from that date forward, I think with a single exception, when we took a second in one class, I have been awarded all the first prizes, I very much regret to say that most of them appear now to have given up exhibiting.

This seems a great pity, nor does it make me anxious to continue to compete. But what is to be done, for if our plants happen to be the best, naturally they must take the prizes? Why they should be the best I am sure I do not know, seeing that although Norfolk is not a county in which many Orchids are grown, there live in it a great number of gentlemen who have far more facilities for their cultivation than I can boast, who keep but a very moderate staff, possess only one boiler, and no proper stove-house, and devote myself to general gardening, which often enough leaves us but little time to attend to the Orchids. Why, then, do I succeed better than many others? I suppose the answer is that, I have myself some knowledge of the plants and take a personal interest in them.

As I think I have said elsewhere in these pages, Orchid-growing undertaken by persons without these qualifications, who leave the business entirely in the hands of their gardeners, will in eight cases out of ten prove a most expensive hobby, and often enough unsatisfactory in its results. If followed on my lines, however, it costs but little—alas! everything of the sort means some expense—whereas the return in bloom is really very good, to say nothing of the pleasure of watching the growth of the plants. The reader must understand, however, that my collection is a most modest one, and I do not suppose that I should take a single prize in districts where there are many Orchidists. There these fall, naturally, to growers with the largest collections, since even if the cultivation be equally good, such collections are sure to furnish a greater proportion of plants absolutely fit for the bench on the day of the show. Also there is a tendency to allot rewards to plants with peculiar characteristics that differentiate them from the ordinary run of the species, or to new and costly hybrids, which, of course, can only be found in the houses of great professional cultivators or of rich private persons. However these things may be, Mason was very pleased with the results at Norwich, as his prizes totalled up to something quite handsome.

There were many beautiful things in the Show besides my humble Orchids. Especially fine were the brilliant double St. Bridget Anemones exhibited by the Irish firm of Ramsbottom, plants of which, I am sorry to say, I have none. The Auriculas, too, were lovely. Mr. R. E. Fletcher staged a collection—I think they took the first prize—that I admired very much, more particularly a yellow sort and a green-veined one named John Garret. I have grown none in the same flight with these. Messrs. Hobbies, of East Dereham, Norfolk, also showed a fine group of a sturdy, yellow variety called Celtic King. Of these I ordered half-a-dozen to be delivered next autumn, at the moderate price of ninepence each, and with them six others, bearing various coloured flowers, such as green-ground, purple and white eye, black and green-edged purple, by increasing which I hope to rear up a really good stock for myself. A collection of Calceolarias, shown, if I remember rightly, by Dr. Osborn, and raised from seed supplied by Messrs Daniels, of Norwich, were really superb in colour and growth, although, personally, the Calceolaria is not a plant that I admire greatly.

Also there were some very good vegetables. I noted particularly a magnificent lot of Victoria Rhubarb and certain huge Daniel's Sensation Potatoes, a very fine-skinned variety, which must, I suppose, have been reared in pipe-heated frames.

But the Show was one of Daffodils, and everywhere they met the eye, in single blooms of huge size, in pots, in bunches, and, towards the end of the Hall, in golden masses of colour. Very lovely they were. The Narcissus of our twentieth century is indeed different to that which I can remember as a boy, so much so that I doubt whether any other flower has been more improved during the last five-and-thirty years. And this improvement is still progressing. Thus, I read in the gardening papers of new and yet more gigantic sorts, of which but a few bulbs exist in the possession of their growers, but that will doubtless appear upon the market within the next five years.

Of course, a new Daffodil, of which in the beginning there may be but one bulb, is a very precious thing. I remember that at the Norwich Show of 1902 there was one of gigantic proportions—compared to it Glory of Leyden was a mere babe. Unfortunately, I forget its name, but when I inquired the price, I was told—a hundred guineas a bulb! For the first few seasons the increase of these bulbs cannot be rapid, but afterwards, as each child itself becomes the parent of hundreds, the output grows like a snowball. Those who live another ten or fifteen years need not despair of buying these hundred-guinea bulbs at sixpence, or even threepence, a-piece. Glory of Leyden used to be very expensive, but I think I purchased my half-dozen bulbs at one and ninepence each last year, and I suppose that this season they will be cheaper.

One cannot help wondering what the Daffodil of, say, 2003 will be like. I have a vision of flowers as large as dinner bells, quite a few of them occupying a whole tent, into which they will be borne one by one upon the shoulders of those gardeners to be. Or, perhaps, Nature will rebel, and call, "Hold! Enough." If so, it matters little, for, after all, there is a limit to the beauty of mere size. Also after a few seasons of cultivation, the proportions of these new Daffodils seem to lessen.

The winning selection, shown by Mrs. Cator, comprised Glory of Leyden. which is larger than Emperor, but otherwise resembles it, having a fine yellow trumpet and a primrose-hued perianth—truly a noble bloom; Madame de Graaff, with a cream trumpet and a white perianth, that still costs about six shillings a bulb; the great Weardale Perfection, with its cream-coloured perianth and yellow trumpet—a splendid thing; and Madame Plemp, which has a very large trumpet, more gold than yellow in hue, and a wide, white perianth. This sort, which I am sorry to say I have not got, is priced at about eight shillings a bulb.

Among the other Narcissi that are unknown to me were Mrs. Bettridge, a fine new white; King Alfred, a deep yellow; and Captain Nelson, a good flower, of which I forget the exact shading. Altogether this was a very satisfactory show.

After leaving it, I went to London to spend some weeks—an unhappy place for gardeners. Yet there are many things to be seen there that are interesting to the observer of nature. How strangely, for instance, the birds adapt themselves to their brick and mortar surroundings, and how extraordinarily they have increased within my recollection. Even in the cat-haunted Paddington square where I was residing I saw various kinds, although only a pair of dusky wood-pigeons, that nested high up in a spindly tree by which cabs roll all day and night, appeared bold enough to rear their young there. Perhaps the cats do not meddle with birds of their imposing size.

It is curious that the wood-pigeon, which in the country is very wild, should have become so tame here that the wanderer in the Park may almost walk upon its tail before it will trouble to rise from the grass. Doubtless, like the sea-gulls in St. James's Park, it has learnt that in London it has nothing to fear from man. Also the abundance of its food, for which it no longer needs to search far and wide, and the changed character of the same, may have affected its nature. At any rate, the London wood-pigeons struck me as larger than those, for instance, that are nesting on my Lawn. Certainly, like everything else in the great city, they are also dirtier, the iridescent hues of the plumage being dulled, and, indeed, hidden beneath a cloak of soot, giving to the bird the appearance of being in half-mourning.

During the last week of April we did many things at Ditchingham. Thus, on the 23rd, we cleaned the Strawberry beds and cut the grass borders. On the 24th, we dug trenches for Peas, sifted and prepared soil for potting purposes; pricked off the seedling Auriculas into a soil composed of turfy loam, lime rubble, well-rotted manure, and leaf-mould; cleaned the borders, and potted up Heliotrope cuttings for bedding later on. On the 25th, we went on with the border cleaning, pricked off more Celery, dressed the Onion beds with soot and salt, and dug the land, where Broccoli had stood, for Peas. Also we watered the Christmas Roses with liquid manure, an attention which I find they appreciate, and set some Rose cuttings, taken from a few bushes of choice sorts that have been forced in the greenhouse.

On this day my few plants of Dendrobium Falconerii began to bloom. To my mind this Dendrobium, which is pendulous and produces lovely-hued flowers, is one of the most beautiful of the race. I have had my specimens for five or six years, and by growing them unshaded in the Warm greenhouse, on the whole succeed very well with them. One season, I think that of 1898, two of them flowered so profusely that the plants, which are large, were almost hidden in their bloom. They have never done quite so well as this again, still they are always beautiful objects.

On Monday, the 27th, we re-potted the Chrysanthemums, and pricked off Celery and Asters. On the 28th we gave a shift to the Capsicums, of which I only grow the large green sort, that is excellent to eat, although, as I have said, indigestible; and sowed Indian-corn, of the variety known as Triumphant, in little pots, where it will remain until the weather allows of its being planted out. Maize is a vegetable very little cultivated in England but, to my fancy, there is none more excellent if boiled on the cob, after the South African fashion. Unfortunately, in this climate, whatever precautions are taken, it is an uncertain crop.

Everything now is receiving liquid manure, especially the Figs, fruit-trees, Cucumbers, and Tomatoes, which, being in full growth, require all the nutriment they can get.

By the end of the month the weather had grown milder at Ditchingham, and some showers fell, but in London it was very bad with pouring rain.

APPLE BLOSSOM ON YOUNG TREES IN NEW GARDEN

MAY

Did our ancestors really dance round flower-decked Maypoles on May-day and pelt each other with Cowslips and Violets among the meads? If so, either they must have been a hardier race than we are, which is quite possible, or the climate has changed. For instance, on May 1, 1903, the best decorated pole in the world would not have got me out of doors, except, perhaps, to look at it from under the shelter of a gig umbrella. Cold wind, pelting showers, dull, lowering skies—these are its record. No wonder that at home both Freaks and Charles retired to bed with influenza. The former, poor old man, was really very ill with some internal complication. His constitution, which must be wonderful, triumphed however, for within a few weeks I found him working as briskly as ever, though looking considerably aged.

At the beginning of the month the four Nymphæas which I had ordered arrived, but the florists, in their wisdom, substituted N. Luciana and N. Speciosa for N. Caroliniana and N. Odorata Exquisita as they thought that the two former were more suitable for planting in a Norfolk pond than the latter. N. Luciana has blooms of a pronounced rose colour, and N. Speciosa produces very large and brilliant flowers, which are sweet scented and also rose-hued. The other two varieties, as I think I have said, are N. Aurora and N. Odorata Sulphurea Grandiflora.

They are but small plants—the whole four of them came in one little parcel-post packet—but I trust that they will grow and multiply. At any rate, they were duly potted in Orchid pans and sunk in a line, some distance from each other, across the shallow end of the Pond. Still, I am not sure that it would not have been wiser to grow them for the first season in a tank in the garden, but, unfortunately, the only tanks which we have available go dry when rain is scarce, so they must take their chance in the Pond, where I hope that the weeds will not smother them.

The half guinea's worth of hardy Ferns which I bought from a grower in Devonshire have also arrived, and been planted in the new Rockery. During the bad weather the Orchids have received some attention in the way of syringing, cleaning, and re-potting. The roots of the Cymbidiums that were dealt with proved to be in fair order, but now I think that we have found out what has been the matter with the Angræcums, of which, it may be remembered, nearly all the flowers turned yellow and rotted. Last year, with the enthusiasm of a convert—a pervert would be a better name—I re-potted these Angræcums in Belgian leaf-mould instead of the customary moss and crocks. Well, they do not like Belgian leaf-mould: at any rate, a quantity of the roots were rotten, except those that had gone through the compost into the crocks beneath. On the other hand, the roots of one plant which had not been re-potted were in good order, and this, I think, was the only specimen that bore some bloom.

On May 1 Lælia Purpurata and Cattleya Mossiæ began to show their flowers. In Venezuela, where it grows, they call the latter gorgeous plant Flor di Maya.

On May 2 I took a morning walk through Hyde Park, and found that the bitter weather had worked disaster. The carefully-tended and beautiful beds of spring flowers were practically destroyed by the frost and wind, many of them being completely brown and unsightly to look on. It is a sad pity. On the other hand, the Lilacs, white and purple, were coming into flower and scenting the air with their sweet fragrance; while the Chestnuts, now in full leaf, threw up their noble spikes of bloom. I know no finer sight than a flowering Horse-chestnut. I see that they grow Water-lilies, from their foliage I presume of the common sort, in the fountain ponds near the Victoria Gate, and find it necessary to protect them with wire-netting, doubtless to prevent the ducks from eating the flowers and foliage. These birds and aquatic plants do not agree well together; at least, the birds do not agree with the plants. Never shall I forget my indignation when once, many years ago, having with difficulty procured and established some roots of white Water-lilies in the Lawn pond, which is now a water-garden, I found in a subsequent spring, on returning home after an absence in distant lands, that my bailiff, thinking the spot suitable to that purpose, had used this pond for the rearing of young ducks, with the result that not a trace of a Water-lily was to be seen. Now I give notice that if I see a duck upon that pond I shoot it.

Another walk that I took in London was through the garden in Leicester Square, a place that I have scarcely visited since it was opened to the public in or about 1874. Indeed, I remember it before this, when it was surrounded by a dirty hoarding, in the centre of which arose a ridiculous statue of a horse, which some wags had painted all the colours of the rainbow, replacing its tail with a worn-out broom. Afterwards it was bought by the financier Baron Grant, and dedicated to the public at great expense, though how anybody could buy a London Square I do not know.

I recall that just about the time of its opening, the Baron went through some financial crisis, which afterwards became exceedingly acute, in connection with a mine called Emma, and that infuriated shareholders in " Emma," or their hirelings, patrolled Leicester

Square between sandwich-boards, on which were inscribed details about that mine and its disasters, together with much abuse of Baron Grant. Well, his monetary vicissitudes are over, and I for one do not abuse him, for the garden of Leicester Square remains, and very tasteful and pretty it is, with the statue of Shakespeare in its midst. The Planes that then were small saplings, are now good-sized trees, and on the benches beneath their shadow sat many tired folk, the wreckage of the pitiless ocean of London life; while between the flower beds played hundreds of dirty children, to whom this little garden in the heart of the great city is, perhaps their only experience of country sights and sounds. Therefore, I invoke peace upon the ashes of Baron Grant, to whose munificence in his palmy days this thing is due.

Never can I recall weather of such long-continued wretchedness as we endured in town throughout the month of May and, two hot days at its beginning excepted, for the first half of June in the year 1903. Thus, on the 3rd, a Sunday, it poured all day, but in the Eastern Counties we seem to have had no rain. On Saturday, the 9th, again, an extraordinary gloom fell over London, about two in the afternoon, following the November-like fog which had prevailed all the morning. So dense was it that it became necessary to turn on the electric light in the club where I was sitting. About three o'clock things culminated in a thunderstorm, and torrents of rain, neither of which would have done discredit to the African veld. And all this, if you please, with the thermometer standing at ten degrees less than the normal temperature for the time of year.

At Ditchingham also it has rained at last, rained heavily, and my doubts are solved. The new drain upon which such unworthy suspicions were cast by the unlearned, has justified itself and me. It works, it works splendidly, delivering water in a thick and magnificent stream. More, it has filled the pond, and submerged the rival drain from the Back-lawn ditch by some six inches. In short, its triumph is complete, and once more wisdom is justified of her children, who are, in this instance, my bailiff, Hood, and myself.

I have been reading in the pages of *Gardening Illustrated*, my horticultural guide, philosopher, and friend, a correspondence which has been going on for several weeks as to whether birds are, or are not, injurious in a garden. From this correspondence I gather that they, *i.e.* the birds, must vary greatly in their habits according to the locality in which they dwell. Otherwise, why should the virtuous blackbirds of A. absolutely refuse to touch fruit, however ripe, luscious, and unnetted, while the felonious blackbirds of B. devour every berry of it that they can come at by fair means or foul. A. says that it is because he puts pans of water about and that what birds really want is not fruit, but water.

Well I have observed their ways for many years, and when puddles lie in every hoof-mark and hollow, to say nothing of brimming ponds and ditches, I have still found blackbirds and thrushes beneath the strawberry nets. If they only needed water, what were they doing there? In truth, I believe that a great deal of nonsense is talked about this matter. Show such birds and many others a ripe fruit, and they will try to get it, even at the risk of life itself.

Some of the writers of these letters, I see, urge that even bullfinches are beneficial, and pick off the buds in order to come at some insect which is supposed to live in the middle of them. I can only say that I never found any of these insects or traces of them, and indeed, doubt whether they exist inside the buds at that time of year. Therefore, if that theory is right, the bullfinch must direct his efforts to prevention rather than to cure, and destroy the buds in case they should become infected with insects at some future time. Further, is the bullfinch insectivorous? I think not. I believe that in winter, and, indeed, whenever he can get them, he lives on seeds and berries, and for the rest of the time upon the flower-buds of fruit and other trees. The worst of this bird is, moreover, that he seems to pull off and throw away half-a-dozen buds for every one that he eats — I suppose from pure mischief, or it may be because only now and again are they to his exact taste.

Luckily, however, in many places bullfinches are scarce, as by comparison the tomtit is also. But of sparrows there are always plenty, and these can be almost as destructive to fruit-buds, and, where other crops are concerned, much more so. The truth is that if a gardener wishes to succeed in this country, he must keep these pests down by every available means, more especially the sparrow, which rarely catches an insect except while it is rearing its young. On the other hand, he should encourage all good birds that live on vermin, insects, worms, grubs, &c., especially kestrels, owls, swallows, wagtails, robins, linnets, nut-hatches, and, to a moderate extent, blackbirds, thrushes, starlings, and chaffinches.

Of course, some of these will eat fruit if they have the chance, and against this there is but one protection —careful and systematic netting. To kill out all birds because some do damage is a madness, as they have found in France and other countries, for then caterpillars, grubs, and other similar pests increase beyond bearing. Also it is most foolish to keep fruit bushes permanently inclosed with wire-netting, as I have seen done sometimes, since in that case the good birds can never get at them or the soil in which they grow, to destroy the various insect plagues that will soon infest them.

What is wanted in this matter is compromise and reason, not the violent partisanship of the bird-lover or bird-hater.

Occasionally the weather moderated a little during the recent May of terrible memory. Thus, that of the 19th was a very fine morning. I took advantage of it to sit in the Park awhile, where I enjoyed myself much. There was a smell of spring in the air, and, indeed, the scene was very peaceful and charming. All about me bloomed the Chestnut trees, the purple Lilac and the Mays, pink and white, looking but little the worse for the hardness they had endured. The greens of the trees also were very fresh and various, and the sunlight played sweetly on the waters of the Serpentine.

The birds, too, were all busy. At the brink of the water the sparrows bathed themselves and pruned their sooty plumage, which they afterwards dusted thoroughly, for fear, I suppose, that it might become too clean. A wild duck came out of a clump of reeds, accompanied by two tiny ducklings, little balls of brown fluff scuttling about after their stately mother. A few days before this duck had seven. Where, then, I wonder, are the other five? It looks almost as though they had come to some bad end, but, if so, she seems to have got over her maternal grief. Other ducks speed round the edge of the water, or fly to and fro across the Park swiftly as arrows, appearing and disappearing amongst the tree tops. Indeed, one can get excellent duck-shooting—with an umbrella—on the borders of the Serpentine.

Then, above, the wood-pigeons wheel and circle slowly, showing themselves off, I suppose, to their mates sitting on their nests unseen among the foliage. The starlings also, of which there now seem to be many in London, are busy worming on the sward, while from across the water even the harsh cries of the peacocks sound melodious. Of these gorgeous fowls a pair wander quite close to me, the cock spreading out his matchless tail and quivering his arched under-wings in the persistent endeavour to make his hen understand how handsome he really is. Probably the performance palls by repetition; at any rate, she takes not the slightest notice of his finest displays, but walks about looking for something to eat in an unresponsive fashion, much as though she were saying, "Do stop bothering and shut up your tail. We finished all that courting business two months ago." Then another peacock appears, looking warlike; and, quite unconcerned, the hen strolls off, leaving the two of them to settle their rivalries.

All this life, animated and still, around which the dull and ceaseless sound of London roars continually, makes a picture very restful to the eye, jaded with the panorama of the streets, that is so changeful and yet so changeless. Truly, Londoners should be grateful for their Parks, for without them the city would be intolerable to live in. Yet I suppose that hundreds of thousands of its inhabitants seldom enter their gates, unless it be to attend a political demonstration and listen to the noisy vapourings of some wind-bag orator.

There are other things to be observed in these Parks, besides the habits of the birds—those of certain of the under-gardeners, for instance. One morning from my seat I watched a pair of them who were engaged in cutting a piece of grass, and I think that I never saw two white men get through less work in a given time, except, perhaps, in South Africa. Very, very slowly, they made a start, and, with great deliberation, dragged and pushed the machine, which had no box upon it, to the appointed place of turning. Here they paused, and talked for several minutes, then started back again, stopped half-way to rest, and finally came to the other end, where the conversation was renewed at still greater length.

So it went on, plenty of talk and very little grass-cutting. I know that at the end of half-an-hour of it I estimated that they had done as much work as two men employed upon their own tasks would accomplish in about seven minutes. It seems probable that the public does not get full value out of servants such as these. Amongst those employed in the streets, especially in connection with steam-rollers, I have noted much the same thing. The detestable spirit which prompts men to do as little as they can for their day's wage seems to be spreading even more rapidly in London than elsewhere, particularly, I am told, among the bricklaying and allied trades.

Of all the many storms during that month in London, I think that I witnessed the most remarkable one Sunday afternoon, from that bay of the library at Windsor Castle where it is said Queen Anne was sitting when Marlborough's letter announcing the news of Blenheim was brought to her. While I was being kindly shown some of the treasures here, slowly the air darkened as a vast cloud of the densest black advanced across the wide plain below, travelling towards London, and shedding as it went thick rain, that looked like sheets of ink. The bright Thames also became of an inky hue, a veritable Styx; Eton Chapel grew dim, and disappeared, except when the lightning flared above it, and a gloom as of night swallowed up the land. Accompanied by raving winds, the storm circled about the Keep, then passed on slowly in all its lurid grandeur, leaving behind it skies that turned from black to grey and from grey to blue, till at length the sun flashed out again; Eton Chapel reappeared amidst the rain-drenched trees and fields, and the Thames shone once more broad and placid, a sheet of burnished silver.

Whilst taking my walks abroad in London, an occupation which, like Doctor Johnson, I enjoy very much, I always make a point of paying a visit to any flower shops that may lie upon my beat, and of inspecting their treasures through the window. Truly, they are beautiful places, for here may be seen the best that the world can grow, placed daily at the disposal of those who are rich enough to buy. What price do they charge, I wonder, for those baskets of Orchids, Cattleyas for the most part just now, or sprays of Odontoglossum Crispum? I have never had the courage to ask, but I understand that it is high, though the individual Orchid grower who attempts to market his blooms gets little enough for them. Indeed, a friend of mine gave up the practice because it proved quite unremunerative. Still, it must be remembered that the owners of these shops have to pay enormous rents and, I hope, good salaries to the clever young women who arrange their wares so well. Also, their stock is the most perishable in the world, and much of it, I imagine, must be wasted, for how can the supply be always accurately adapted to the demand on any given day? To make up beautiful bouquets, baskets, and crosses on the chance of their being bought is surely risky. Therefore, I suppose, that those which we see in the windows are orders placed there for a few hours before delivery.

There are many other things besides Orchids, such as noble bunches of forced Lily-of-the-valley of the Fortin's variety, bowls of beautiful Violets from the south of France, masses of greenhouse Roses, each flower perfect, and cut with long stems, after the American fashion, armfuls of gorgeous Iris, and so on without end. Then there are the fruits from every clime. Bright-skinned Apples from Tasmania, most of which look better than they taste; splendid "navel" Oranges, hothouse Peaches and Nectarines, and gigantic Asparagus from France and Belgium.

I measured some of this Asparagus as well as I could with my pocket-handkerchief, for it stood upright against the window, and made out that the stems were about eighteen inches in length. How it is grown to such a size I cannot imagine, nor do I consider the result, from an eating point of view, worth the trouble; at least, I would far rather have a bundle from my garden at Kessingland, which produces the best Asparagus that I have ever tasted.

The foreign growers, also, are very thrifty people, as I discovered the other day at a London dinner-party. Putting one of these great heads into my mouth, suddenly I found myself gagged by something extremely piercing, of which one point was fixed in my tongue and the other in my palate. On examination, this proved to be a long splinter of wood, sharpened at both ends, as in some Oriental countries they sharpen stakes for the capture of crocodiles. Evidently, when that stick of Asparagus was cut, the head had broken off, and was thus ingeniously replaced with an invisible wooden pin. The careful market-gardener did not trouble himself as to what might happen to the individual who swallowed his splinter, or suffer the prospect of that unknown person's death by peritonitis to weigh upon his conscience. His affair was not to waste a fine piece of Asparagus.

Talking of Asparagus, I may say here that ours has been below the average, both in quality and quantity this year. For the first part of the season, indeed, it was thin and woody, the result of the persistent cold, from which, in fact, it never really recovered.

On the afternoon of the 20th I went to Kew Gardens, an expedition that I always try to make at least once a year. Thither I travelled upon the roof of a tram from Shepherd's Bush. This is a very pleasant, if somewhat crowded, method of progression on a fine day, especially when compared with the first part of my journey, which was by Tube, my opinion of the atmosphere of which I will not set down, lest it should be held libellous. It is curious, by the way, to note how these trams have driven every other vehicle off the roads where they run. Thus, between Shepherd's Bush and Kew I saw neither cab nor 'bus. The new Kew Bridge had been opened by the King on the previous day, and was still adorned with bunting. I walked over it, and thought it very solid and commodious, but could not get far enough away to see its architecture.

The Gardens—are there any more beautiful in the world? — were looking their very best on this fine spring day, every tree and bush being dressed in vivid green, although here the Chestnuts were not yet blooming. At Kew gardening is really practised as an art, a description that I hold it certainly deserves, since pictures more beautiful than those upon canvas can be painted with Nature's own colourings of green and flowers, while trees, cunningly disposed and massed, are, after all, as imposing in their own way as any buildings made by man. Thus, one of the first beds that I looked at was planted with Bluebells of different shades, mixed with springing Ferns, whereof the tender fronds were unfolding themselves by hundreds. The effect was wonderfully good, and free from any jarring note of colour, especially when viewed from a little distance. Near by were other beds of double Anemones, a little past their best, it is true, but still very rich and striking.

The drawback to the glasshouses at Kew is that the pathways are not wide enough to accommodate all the people who pass along them. Most of these, to judge from their conversation, have little real knowledge of, or interest in, the plants which they inspect in so rapid and perfunctory a fashion. As a result, the individual who wishes to study the flowers finds it difficult to do so at his leisure. Single pilgrims, or even small parties, he can let pass by squeezing himself against the stages, but when a girls' school comes he is swept along like a straw before the flood. I, in my selfishness, should like to visit these houses when nobody else is admitted.

Still, I managed to observe some things. The Odontoglossums Crispum and the Miltonias Vexillaria I thought a good and worthy show. The Cymbidiums Lowianum also were well grown and bloomed, although none of the specimens are large. Chlorœa Crispa was to me a new thing, nor can I find it in my Orchid book. Anyhow, it is a striking object, with its white spike of bloom springing from a tall stem, and in general appearance reminded me of a small Gladiolus. It is a pity that it should lack foliage to relieve it. Of the spotted Cypripedium Bellatulum which I used to grow once, and the noble C. Rothschildianum, there were some fine specimens. Cyp. Sanderianum, which I had never seen before, also struck me as a splendid plant. It has very long spiral "weepers" or petals (I should say that they measured eighteen inches) depending from the bloom, and from its size, habit, and colouring is, I should judge, a cross between C. Rothschildianum and C. Caudatum. This, however, is but a guess.[1] I wish that I owned a specimen of this impressive Cypripedium.

Other noble things were Selenipedium Titanum and Sel. Dominianum. The last is a hybrid between Cyp. (or Sel.) Caricinum and Cyp. (or Sel.) Caudatum. The lip is brown in front and yellow behind, and the petals are twisted. It bears three flowers on a stem. There was also a fine Cyp. Grande, but it seemed to be a somewhat sparse bloomer. This interested me, as I have two plants of this Cypripedium, one a large specimen; but they seldom bloom with me although their growth is vigorous and their general health excellent. Do they want more heat than I can give them, I wonder, or do I overpot? The Sobralia Macrantha, which the uninitiated would take for a lovely flowering reed, was but a poor specimen for Kew, and, indeed, did not look healthy. My own plants of this species are much finer.

Here also was a good collection of the curious Sarracenias, with their weird, veined, and blotched pitcher-shaped blooms, fitted with a lid at top, I suppose to shut down on the unfortunate fly that is visiting inside. These were grown in an annexe to the Orchid houses (they are not Orchids, but herbaceous perennials), which seemed to be totally unshaded. These Sarracenias are curious enough, very nightmares of flowers, indeed, but I do not call them beautiful or even attractive.

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[1] I find that I was mistaken. Cyp. Sanderianum is a species which comes from the Malay Archipelago.—H. R. H.

In addition to the above, I saw many other Orchids, of which I have no space to write. Taking them altogether, I thought them a fine and well-grown collection.

The beds allotted to Rhododendron Indicum and Rho. Synense, as they are here labelled (I have always called them hardy Azaleas), which are generally so gorgeous a sight at Kew, had suffered terribly from the frost and cold. Many of the buds were quite withered, and a good deal of the wood seemed to be dead. A gardener, who was tending them, told me that he had seldom known them to be so much knocked about, and, indeed, their beauty for the year is spoilt. Of the Rhododendrons themselves, or, at any rate, of those which I had time to visit, only the early whites and reds seemed to be in flower. The Eremuri Robustus, which is, I believe, the hardiest of its class, were yet a good deal injured by the cold. It is a very striking plant, with its broad leaves and lilac-hued flower-stems, that grow as much as ten feet high, but requires a large garden to show it off. Those at Kew were throwing up their stems, notwithstanding the unpropitious weather. The Aralia Chinensis Pyramidilis, which are classed as hardy shrubs, were so much cut about by the frost that some of them seemed to be almost dead.

In one of the great Palm houses, that near the tea garden, which, I think, is called the Orangery, fumigation was in progress on a Titanic scale. This was effected by means of an apparatus that resembled a portable forge, which was worked with a wheel, and emitted dense columns of tobacco fumes that floated upwards like the smoke of a sacrifice, and, doubtless, did to death thousands of noxious insects hidden among the tops of the lofty palms and ferns. I dived across the

LILAC AND LABURNUM

place from one door to another, and, in so doing, was nearly choked. How the men employed could bear those fumes I know not, for, although they held their noses very tight, these must penetrate to the lungs. I suppose that they are accustomed to the job, which is one for which certainly I should not care, and in such huge places, doubtless, this has proved the only effective method of fumigation.

On May 23 I went to Ditchingham to spend Sunday and Monday. Luckily, the weather was fine, and the place looked its best in the glory of the early summer foliage, if the end of May 1903 could be called summer, and its green garment of springing grass, dotted everywhere with flowers.

A return to the company of Nature after a course of city streets affects me more than almost any other change or experience, and this with increasing force as the years go by. For as we—or some of us—grow older, I think that more and more do we appreciate the truth that Nature is our best companion, and has better gifts to offer to those who love her, more kindness, sympathy, and consolation, than aught else beneath the stars. I will not say that such a change fills me with rapture, for that sounds sentimental and exaggerated, but certainly it moves me as do few other circumstances. I can sympathise even with those hermits who have chosen to live out their lives alone, companioned only by forests of odorous pines, or even by the bare grandeur of neighbouring mountains and the unwearied rush of flowing water. Often, indeed, I have thought that, under some conditions, I could be happier dwelling thus than as an item in our world of turbulent and ceaseless struggle towards ends which never can be gained. As time glides on and bears away our friends, our enthusiasms, our illusions, our ambitions, our hopes, and even our fears; as the sky of Life, that was so many-coloured in the morning, grows to grey in its afternoon, which merges by degrees into the menace and blackness of advancing night, I think that many among us become more apart in spirit, more conscious of the essential loneliness of every living soul, and are led to seek in solitude those things pertaining to our peace. Alone we were born, alone we must die; it is well that sometimes we should learn to live alone.

And yet I daresay that the hermits are frequently much bored, and that after a month or two of their existence we should long for a walk in Piccadilly, or even for the gossip of a country tea-party.

Having rid myself of the rapturous attentions of the two dogs, Bob and Bustle, animals that do *not* appreciate solitude, and nearly had a fit on hearing my footstep, I went first to the Orchid houses, which Mason was waiting to show me, not, I think, without pride. Truly, they were beautiful; at least, the term is not too strong for the Intermediate house, where I found the Cattleyas Mossiæ coming into full bloom. Of these plants I have a number, some of them large specimens. I did not count the flowers, but all down the front stage and hanging from the roof there were very many of them showing an infinite variety of colouring and most gorgeous in their mass. If only we could exhibit them now! But, unfortunately, at this time of year there is no local show.

In the Cool house there was not so much to be seen, for its glory departed with the Cœlogynes and the winter-flowering Cypripediums, but the greenhouses were very gay with various things. Next I visited the new bit of Fernery, which has been made under the shadow of the old sloping wall, between two buttresses that I built twenty years or so ago near to the Vinery garden door. Mason has arranged it very tastefully and well, planting in it, amongst others, some of the Ferns that I procured from Devonshire, although these make no show as yet. The other Fernery by the garden pond also flourishes, and I am glad to see that the Osmundas are throwing up fronds in their new home.

This enlarged Kitchen-garden pond has been quite full, but has since sunk a foot or eighteen inches. Whether this is owing to a fault in the clay somewhere —and I see a suspicious-looking chalky patch just above the water-line, or to the fact that the blue-clay subsoil of the excavation was absolutely dry, and therefore absorbs an enormous quantity of moisture, I cannot say. I hope, however, that the latter is the true reason, for otherwise we may have some trouble.

From the Kitchen-garden pond I went to the Lawn-pond, and found all well here. With the exception of a few belated examples, the Daffodils were done, as were the Polyanthus, but the Tulips were still blooming, especially those of the Darwin variety, which stood up here and there, tall, stately, and self-coloured. Being so late in flower, these are particularly useful bulbs. Most of the Lilies-of-the-valley which I planted on this bed have come up with variegated leaves, why I know not, for I bought them as ordinary Dutch crowns. On the little swamp border round the pond some pieces of the purple Iris that I transplanted here from my garden at Kessingland, where it grows in great clumps, are flowering well and look very handsome. It is an amazing thing that this Iris, which has hitherto grown in soil which is often very dry, should now flourish with its roots in water, where I set it as an experiment, and I am curious to know whether it will continue to do so or die away. Anyhow, it is effective while it lasts, and there are plenty more where it came from; indeed, Bayfield says that he must lessen the stock.

Another thing flowering here in the swamp is the charming Trollius Acaulis, one of the Globe flowers, which from a little distance looks like a glorified Buttercup. I have but one plant of it, which bloomed last year, when I tried to save the seed. Just as this was ripening, however, a lamb squeezed itself between the bars of the railing and ate it all up. No other thing did that lamb touch, except the Trollius seed-pods, which were being so carefully preserved. This season I hope to try again, although I believe that it takes two years to get flowering plants of Trollius from seed. In the pond itself the Water-lilies are throwing up their leaves, those of the hybrids mottled with red looking very handsome, as do the various tall grasses that surround its border. The weeds, too, I observe, are growing furiously in the water, notwithstanding that they have been raked out once or twice. In such ponds weeds are a great trouble and require constant attention.

I possess an iron arch, covered with stout wire mesh, that I bought at a sale some years ago, and I have settled with Mason to cut away a piece of the sloping bed and set it up opposite the single Hawthorn tree, to run Tropæolums and Canariensis over, placing a seat beneath. This should make a pleasant place to sit in the summer and watch the Water-lilies floating on the pond beneath.

Outside the railings of this pond stands a zinc pump, used to raise water for the garden in dry times. In the cylinder of that naked pump a tomtit has built its nest, and sits there hissing savagely whenever one tries to inspect its domestic arrangements from above. I remember years ago, when first I returned from Africa, where I had been much accustomed to snakes, being greatly alarmed by these hisses proceeding from a hollow tree into which I had put my hand, since, forgetting the country I was in, I thought full surely that I was about to be bitten by one of these deadly reptiles. This tomtit's choice of quarters is awkward, as the pump is wanted, but I have given orders that it is not to be disturbed.

On the south side of the house the yellow Banksian

CLEMATIS MONTANA ON GARDEN ARCH

rose, which grows up to the topmost storey, and was here long before my day, is beginning to bloom, very late this year, owing to the cold. To judge by the thousands of buds, in a week's time it will be a sheet of gold, a truly beautiful object. Fifteen or sixteen years ago the roots of this Rose were so dreadfully cut about during some alterations to the house that I thought it would certainly die. But it did nothing of the sort; on the contrary, it greatly improved. This, however, may be because we have pruned it much less of late years, merely cutting out old stems now and then and some of the long shoots of sappy wood. Banksias hate the knife. Mixed up with it is one of the white variety which I planted about eight years ago. It has done well, though it has scarcely room to develop itself, and the bunches of snowy bloom appearing among the yellow look very pretty.

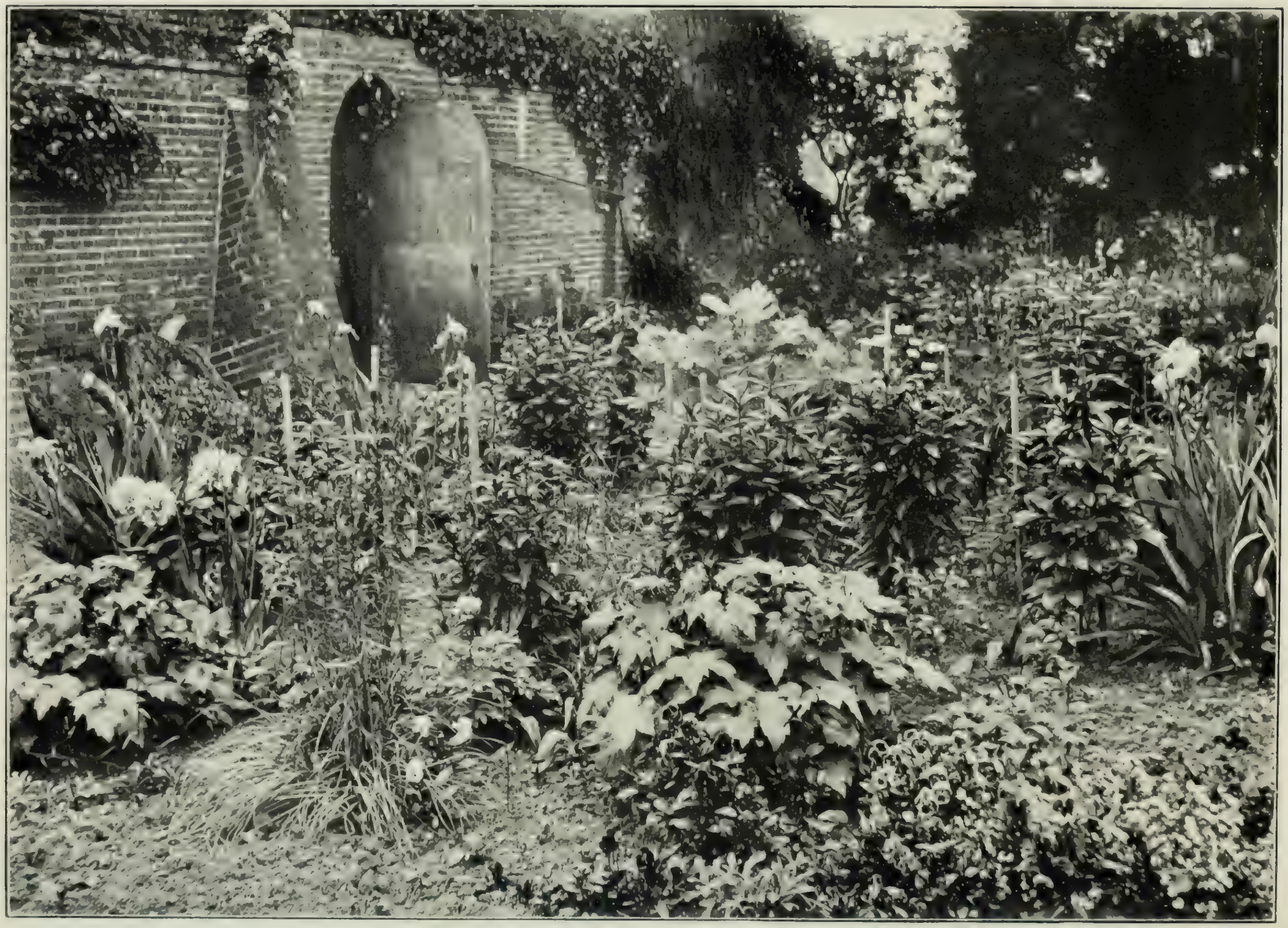
No other Roses are out, except some of the very old fashioned double and sweet-scented pink variety, that also grow upon the wall. These are ancient bushes, I imagine at least sixty or seventy years old, and at the ground level have stems almost as thick as a man's leg.

On the House farm by the gate, where I am staying, which has a south-east aspect, the Gloire de Dijon and Henrietta Maria roses have, however, opened scores of blooms, of which I have a beautiful bunch upon my table, while the William Allan Richardson and Cheshunt hybrid are coming on rapidly. On the south-eastern aspect of the house the Clematis Montana, which is planted between the bow windows, and grows up to the top of the building, is covered with white bloom. I think this one of the most satisfactory of the tribe, as it never goes wrong, and is always beautiful, but the drawback to it is that the thick stems are naked, its motto being "Excelsior."

In a colder position, at the eastern corner, is an ancient Honeysuckle of the common variety, now also in full glory. This Honeysuckle I moved years ago from a fence by one of the gates, where it had grown so long that the memory of man ran not to the contrary. At the time they told me that it would die, but the Honeysuckle took a different view of this matter. On the north of the house, the Ivy, which has looked bare since its clipping in the spring, is throwing out its new and vivid leaves. Few things are more beautiful in their way than a breadth of Ivy that is kept properly clipped. If neglected, it becomes very unsatisfactory.

While on the subject of clipping, I may add that there is one melancholy sight in the garden—the Yew fence upon the Drive bank. For years these Yews have been allowed to grow uncut, till at length they had become so scraggy, especially where they stand under the shade of the Beeches, that radical treatment was needful. So we sawed off their tops and pruned in their sides, with the result that now they look more like faggots of pea-sticks than a Yew fence. This is what comes of refusing to face a disagreeable duty, but I hope that they will recover in time. The three pink Mays upon the Lawn which I planted about 1885 are not yet out, but the Laburnums in the garden shine like cascades of gold. What is there more lovely than a flowering Laburnum? My white Lilacs near the kitchen yard door are also in full bloom. Unfortunately, about a year ago, I was obliged to cut out three of these trees, for I have grown them as standards, not as bushes, as they were injuring the Arbor-vitæs, amongst which they stood, and something had to go. I think that we make a great mistake in planting shrubs too thickly in the first instance, a course to which those who sell them are not unnaturally prone to urge us. The end of it is that a large number of beautiful specimens, for the most part too large to transplant, must be ruthlessly sacrificed.

About eight or ten years since I planted seven Purple Beeches on the lawn, as we had only one in the place, and that a copper rather than a purple. Now they are



ELM-TREE GARDEN

in full leaf, and already handsome little trees. We shrink from setting forest trees, thinking that we shall never live to see them come to beauty, but as the old tale says, they grow while we are sleeping, and for most of us a time arrives when we rejoice that we faced this duty. For a duty it is, though we are seldom grateful enough to our ancestors, who undertook it in their day, with the results that we see around us.

I observe, however, that in these counties, and, indeed, throughout England, with the exception of Larch and Spruce game coverts, more timber is being cut down than is planted. I could point to properties off which scores of Oaks, hundreds of years old, have been sold, and where they stood I see no young trees.

The Elm-tree beds now look charming with Violas, purple Honesty, and other things, and on that in front of the Cold orchid house the bush Peonies that I planted two or three years ago are beginning to flower for the first time. Of these nurserymen generally furnish but small roots; for blooms the gardener must wait with patience. The Parrot tulips here have done but badly, many of them being innocent of flower, why I cannot say. In the Tomato house there is a good show of Figs on the back wall, and the same may be said of Peaches in the Peach house. But in spite of its early promise, the prospects for outside fruit are indeed dismal. I doubt whether there will be a single Apple or Pear in the orchard, while the espaliers in the garden show but few. The bitter frost has perished all of them. Notwithstanding the cold, however, the vegetables seem to flourish well.

After I returned to London I visited the Temple Flower Show. Other engagements made it impossible for me to do this until the third day of the exhibition, which, as it chanced, was not without advantages to me. In the first place, I found that I had only to pay a shilling for admission instead of a good deal more, and, in the second, the weather had turned cold again. On the two previous days, or so I was informed, the tents were so hot as to be practically unbearable. Indeed, this is one of the great drawbacks to all shows which are held under canvas, that is rarely properly ventilated, and out of which the heat cannot escape, but, rather increases continually till the visitors pant and the exhibits wither.

On May 28, about eleven in the morning, one of those extraordinary storms came up, of which there have been so many in London this year. In the Temple gardens, it is true, the rainfall was but slight, but not so the gloom. Indeed, for a while it grew so dark in the tents that the colours of the flowers could no longer be distinguished, and I could scarcely see the faces of the people standing next to me. This circumstance and the earliness of the hour prevented the place from being overcrowded, so that when the light grew again I was able to make my round in comfort.

Certainly, it was a glorious Show, and to attempt to describe it in detail here would be hopeless, so I will only mention a few of the things that struck me most. First, there were some Darwin Tulips—I forget who exhibited them—which were finer than any I have seen. One called Noir was a most impressive flower, a veritable black Tulip. I wonder what it would have fetched among the Dutchmen in the seventeenth century, when the most colossal sums were given for new varieties of Tulips, as large, or even larger, than are paid for rare Orchids to-day. In some strange fashion, which I cannot understand, these Tulips seem to have become speculative counters in those times, and to have formed the basis of a system of gambling. Thus bulbs were bought and sold which did not and never would exist, though it is obvious that the last purchaser, who expected delivery, must have been doomed to disappointment. Indeed, one would think that everyone concerned must have had a right of action against everybody else. But the whole question of the speculative side of this departed mania is a mystery, of which I can find no satisfactory solution.

Another very curious Tulip in this exhibit, called Viridiflora, was green in hue. I did not think it pretty. Lord Aldenham's group of Streptocarpus was very fine, as, indeed, were those shown by Messrs. Veitch. What attracted me more, however, was a really beautiful collection of hardy flowers, arranged naturally, and staged by Messrs. Cheal.

Never did I see such Begonias as those exhibited by Messrs. Peed & Sons. The colours were beautiful, and many of them were of the size of Roses; indeed, looked at from a little distance, they might have been mistaken for Roses. The variety called Lord Roberts, a huge flower of a double sort, scarlet in colour, impressed me very much. Yet, fine as these were, those exhibited by Messrs. Blackmore & Langdon were even finer, or so the judges thought, since the gold medal was awarded to that firm. Personally, I should have found it hard to choose between the two exhibits.

Near Peed's Begonias were Roses of perfect shape and colour, especially the cream-hued Duchess of Devonshire, or so I think it was named, exhibited, I believe, by J. Kent. Then came a wonderful collection of Gloxinias, and next I paused at something new to me, Cannell and Sons' Cacti and succulent plants. The last Cacti that I saw were *in situ*, growing on the arid highlands of Mexico, and well do I remember how strange they looked in the moonlight, their tall growths pointing to the sky like countless fingers. Here were none of these giants, but prickly plants of every shape and size, up to the dimensions of a large football. Some bore wondrous blossoms, others were covered with wool, like animals, others looked as if they were cut from rock, and nearly all had a faded appearance, as though they had been exposed to centuries of sun, which contrasted most strangely with the rich hues of their flowers. I should like to have a collection of these Cacti and their kind, which are always interesting and, in most instances, take but little room. The only thing that I know against them is that the majority of their flowers are but short-lived. There is an exception, however, which bears the pleasing name of Phyllocactus Phyllanthoides (German Empress), of which the blooms are said to last quite a long time.

Messrs. Cannell's Cannas were also most attractive. It is wonderful how these plants have been improved within my recollection. I can remember when their flowers were very insignificant, and now they are often of the size and brilliancy of Orchids. Few people who are only acquainted with Cannas in our gardens can imagine what they look like at home in a tropical Mid-American forest. There I have seen them forming dense thickets, through which no man could pierce, and growing, unless my memory deceives me, from twelve to twenty feet high.

On my way to the Orchid tent I stopped to admire the group of golden-hued Calla Elliotiana (Richardia seems to be the proper name), truly a glorious variety of the Arum. I believe that, like others of this race, they hail from South Africa, where I have seen thousands of the white sort blooming in the swamps—Pig-lilies we call them there, because those animals feed upon their roots. But I never came across a yellow one, and do not know where they grow. Somewhere in the Cape, I suppose, as a friend brought me several bulbs, or rhizomes, from that Colony, which now flower in the greenhouse every year.

The Orchids were magnificent—of a sort, indeed, that fill the breast of the poor country grower with envy, that if he were left alone with them might easily develop into kleptomania. How splendid, for instance, were Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's Vandas Teres, so named from the rounded, finger-like leaves, with their trusses of beauteous rosy bloom springing from the tall and straggling stems. They were grown to absolute perfection, probably, I should say, in a house given up to them. Once I had a few of these plants, but abandoned their culture for lack of the heat which they love.

Messrs. Low, the well-known growers, showed a fine collection, including a beautiful Cattleya Intermedia Alba and various hybrids. The gentleman in charge, with whom I had an instructive conversation, made a remark that interested me very much, to the effect that their experience was that hybrids do better and have much more vigour of constitution than is the case with imported Orchids. For this, if one comes to think of it, there is a very good reason, seeing that the hybrid is Európean born, and, therefore, more fitted by nature to thrive in our climate.

I believe that in years to come the importation of these plants will lessen greatly, if for no other reason, because their dwelling grounds, where they are for the most part not preserved, will be worked out. Then must come the turn of the hybridiser, or of the raiser from seed, and it is probable that before this century is out the greenhouses of future growers will be almost entirely stocked from these sources, and that the costly crosses, of those sorts which experience proves to be the most beauteous and desirable, will be bought for fewer shillings than they now cost guineas. Orchids are, without doubt, the great greenhouse plants of the future, as, considering their infinite variety, surpassing beauty, lasting qualities, and the ease with which most of them can be cultivated, given a little intelligence and a natural affection for them, they certainly deserve to be.

All hybrids are not desirable, indeed, many of them I consider ugly, since the parents sometimes resent the mating forced upon them by men, and revenge themselves by producing a monstrous, or, at least, an unlovely offspring. I believe that, theoretically, all Orchids can be crossed; at any rate, fertile marriage has taken place between the most dissimilar species, but it is certain that *all* should *not* be crossed, any more than a white woman should marry a Hottentot, or a Zulu mate with an Esquimau. With others it is different, as anyone will admit who saw at this Show the progeny resulting from the union of Lælia Purpurata and Brassavola Digbyana, or between Brassavola Digbyana and the various Cattleyas, such as Mossiæ, Shrœderæ, and Aurea, the last one of the most glorious flowers that ever I beheld, being in effect a large Brassavola, tinged with gold, and having its margin wonderfully fringed, as in the Digbyana parent.

There is no doubt that here, although Nature never thought of it, or perhaps it was impossible if Cattleyas do not grow with the Brassavolas in Honduras, a point on which I am ignorant, we have a marked improvement upon both species, beautiful as they are. Indeed, I think there are no Cattleyas which would not be improved by a strain of the Brassavola Digbyana blood, a fact which will, I expect, be widely recognised in the future. In short, the most glorious Orchids can be made even more glorious by the patience, skill, and experience of man. Also individuals of exceptional loveliness, such as, for instance, Cypripedium Insigne Sanderæ, the imperial yellow variety of which I have already spoken in this book, can be increased by division and seed propagation till the progeny of the single imported plant, some triumphant sport of Nature, becomes as common as is the ordinary greenhouse C. Insigne of to-day. Unfortunately, few of us will live to see this consummation (imagine buying a good plant of C. Insigne Sanderæ or B. Digbyana Aurea for three shillings!), but the process is going on, and—

a time will come—for here, too, the motto *Ars longa* applies.

For Orchid growers unborn there is a glorious future! Then, too, I believe, the objects at which they will aim will be beauty and constitution; not mere eccentricity of bloom. Thus, in those halcyon days, they will not give two hundred and fifty guineas or over for an Odontoglossum Crispum, merely because the flower is a little more heavily blotched than is common. At this very Show I saw one valued, I believe, at that price and called, I think, the Beatrice, because of certain markings on the flower, which the imaginative said resembled bees. It was beautiful in its way, and had the distinction of being exhibited under a glass case, but to my fancy an ordinary pure white Crispum, value, say, five shillings, is as beautiful if it bears flowers of the proper rounded type. Or, if they still desire such markings, doubtless they will be able to produce them by sowing the seeds of plants with that peculiarity, or, more probably, by crossing the common Crispums with other spotted and blotched Odontoglossums of slightly different race. Indeed, I believe that it is quite a question whether some of these varieties are not, in fact, natural hybrids.

Other very beautiful crosses that I saw were those between the allied species of Lælias and Cattleyas. These struck me as very successful. A curious Cypripedium, though in itself not beautiful, that is, to my taste, was exhibited by Messrs. Cowan. It is called Callosum Sanderæ, and is almost green in colour, but whether a hybrid, or a species, I confess I do not know.

The Miltonias Vexillaria were splendid, indeed, I think them one of the most perfect of all flowers. Certainly, *they* cannot be improved by crossing. The difficulty, or, rather, one of the difficulties, which constantly confront the writer of such a book as I am attempting, is that it is impossible, at any rate, to my limited powers, to describe a bloom in words. If any reader is critical and doubts me, let him take—we will say a Rose—and place it on the table before him. Then let him take pen and ink also, and attempt to set down the shape, outline, habit, colouring, &c., of that Rose, in such a fashion that anyone who had never seen a Rose would, from his description, be able to form a clear picture in his mind of its appearance and various beauties. I think that he would fail. I think that all the greatest prose-writers in the language, with the poets thrown in, would fail also. The thing is beyond words, or, if it is not, we cannot find the words.

Take the case of Miltonia Vexillaria, for instance. Many of my readers may never have seen this plant, and I should like to give them some accurate idea of its beauty, and what can I think of to say? Nothing, except that the flower is more like a glorified, very flat, pink Viola, than anything else which occurs to me. In my helplessness, I turn for light, to Mr Williams's excellent work, "The Orchid-Grower's Manual," and, as my own strength fails, I will venture to quote him:

"The plant," *i.e.*, Miltonia Vexillaria, "has small, narrow, oblong, compressed pseudobulbs, and light green, elliptic-lanciolate acumenate leaves, eight to ten inches long and one inch broad; the slender scapes are produced from the sides of the bulbs, and bear from five to seven flowers each, the sepals and petals being oblong obtuse, of a bright rosy pink, and the large orbicular, two-lobed lip of the same."

This is admirably accurate, as accurate as it can be, but I wonder whether from it any reader who has never seen a Miltonia Vexillaria will learn enough to recognise that plant when he does see it. Mr. Williams helps himself out with a full-page illustration, which gives a good notion of the shapes of the bulb, leaf, and bloom, but, being in plain black and white, of their colour none at all. To be of service in this direction every book on flowers should be illustrated with life-sized, hand-painted plates from the brush of Miss North, whom I had the pleasure of knowing in bygone years, and whose work is familiar to all visitors to Kew; or now, as she is, unhappily, gone from us, of the first flower-artists of the day, whoever they may be, and as a consequence, cost from fifty to a hundred guineas.

Tearing myself away from the Orchids, among which, had not my time been limited, I should have liked to stop some hours, I returned to the general Tent. Here I saw Barr's beautiful Ixias, graceful many-coloured things, and, like a number of other bulbous plants, natives of South Africa. The same exhibitor showed a good selection of the dwarf Japanese trees. It is curious to look at an Oak or a Fir bearing every appearance of extreme antiquity—I should say that some of these, to judge by their gnarled and knotted stems, may have seen two hundred summers—perfect in every way, but not more than a couple of feet high, and growing in an eight-inch china pot. Their effect is that of a well-painted tree cut from a canvas of ordinary size. There they seem natural enough, and to be admired. But when one looks at these trees knowing them to be real, living pigmies, that for generations have formed and shed their leaves while men were born, grew old, and died around them, and from father to son have tended to their wants, the impression left upon the mind is curious and not altogether pleasant. For nothing that is unnatural can be quite pleasing.

One wonders what *they* think of the whole business, if think they can, as, stood upon some verandah, they stare from their squat, china jars at their mighty brethren of the forest, younger, perhaps, by a century than themselves. How they must hate the creatures that planted their germs in orange skins and shaved off their lusty roots, turning them into abortions and a mockery to their kind. Or, perhaps, they are content to live, even thus, knowing, at least, that nobody will cut them down for timber.

Only minds with a curious twist in them, that is wanting to those of western peoples; minds of a race so ancient that they have grown weary of the commonplace and the natural, and seek amusement in the distorted and the unfamiliar, would care to devote their ingenuity to such an end. The Chinese dwarf their women's feet, and, by somewhat similar processes, the Japanese dwarf their trees. I think the underlying idea or motive must be the same, but what that is it would be hard to say.

However this may be, these pigmies of the garden fetch a high price among certain amateurs, and can always be relied upon to excite conversation at a dinner-party. Perhaps the Japanese have also found them useful for that purpose.

An exhibit that pleased me better were Messrs. Backhouse's pots of Cypripedium Spectabile, the Mocassin flower of America, which is as beautiful as any we grow in greenhouses, with its round, white lip, stained with carmine. Once I had a plant or two of this, and flowered it under glass, but that is not the way in which it should be grown. Rather ought it to be established in some moist, shady place out in the open air. Hitherto I have had no such spot, but an idea has come to me of making use of the ditch down which the water from the Lawn runs into the pond for the growth of this Cypripedium and of its fellows, C. Acaule, C. Guttatum, and C. Pubescens. This, all being well, I hope to attempt another year, and I should imagine that they would not mind occasionally being under water.

The last item—I have grown weary of the word exhibit—that I will mention at this wonderful Temple Show are Mr. Robert Addey's Mushrooms, raised in pots and pans that had been plunged, I was informed, in an ordinary Mushroom bed. Certainly, they were wonderful, some of the receptacles being absolutely crowded with Mushrooms.

I wish that all of us could succeed as well with that delicious fungus, Agaricus Campestris. Owing to that wretched crack in the brickwork, whereof I have spoken, which let the heat through from the boiler house, notwithstanding all the trouble that we took, mine this year have been a failure, which is one of those disappointments to which gardeners are heir.

JUNE

Whilst I was in London I attended one of Messrs. Protheroe & Morris's Orchid sales. If I had found time I should have gone to several of them, for I know no more fascinating place or occupation. Many plant-lovers will be acquainted with the Rooms in Cheapside and their narrow entrance near the Clock. As the door is passed, a familiar smell greets the nostrils, the smell of Orchid plants, and flowers, too, from those that are being sold in bloom, which always reminds me of the Tropics and their spicy vegetation, adulterated with the musty odours of wood shavings and stale cigar smoke. Customers are requested not to smoke pipes in the Auction Rooms, why I cannot imagine, since this form of tobacco is, I imagine, no more injurious to plants than are cigars and cigarettes. However this may be, the rule is by no means strictly observed, and I never saw anyone called to order for its breach.

In front of the high rostrum is placed a horseshoe-shaped table, round which sit those of the buyers who are so minded, but the dealers who purchase on commission, like my friend Mr. Tracy, of Twickenham, invariably stand at the foot of the table. This they do that they may be able to inspect each plant, or lot, as it is brought forward by the porters, since their practised eyes can tell its exact condition at a glance, and whether or no it has borne the journey well and is likely to thrive. The inexperienced amateur is too apt to judge of a specimen by its size alone, which is a great mistake, since much of that size may be due to old wood or useless pseudo-bulbs. What he should look at are the

BANKSIAN ROSE IN BLOOM

number of breaks at the bases of last year's bulbs, for those breaks, if in good condition, will in time produce new growths and flower sheaths, whereas, if there are none, or they are rubbed off, the plant may not recover for years, if it does so at all.

Upon the end of the table nearest to the auctioneer's desk, and perhaps on that desk itself, may generally be seen a dozen or more of Orchids in flower, all of them sports or rarities, or new hybrids, or in some other way remarkable. At two o'clock the sale of the ordinary lots ceases, in order that these gems may be put up, and either knocked down for many guineas apiece, or, if the reserve is not reached, passed. Then, of course, humble folk like myself stand aside and let the leviathan growers or amateurs clear their cheque-books for action.

For instance, a tiny plant is put up, and passed for a few seconds from hand to hand. It is a hybrid Cypripedium, bearing a single, beautiful flower, with a dorsal sepal that shines like burnished jet.

"Now, gentlemen, what may I say? The best thing of the sort that has passed through these rooms. Twenty guineas. Thank you. Twenty-five. Thirty-five. Forty in two places. Forty-five. Against you, Mr. A. Fifty. Gone. Mr. A."—or another.

"Now this white Mossiæ, with the yellow lines upon the lip, altogether distinct from Reineckiana, quite unique so far as my experience goes. Fifty. Thank you. Sixty. Seventy. Eighty—Yes, it is a high price, but there isn't another like it in England. It would be a credit to Highbury itself. Ninety. Think what hybrids might be raised from it. A hundred." And after one hasty glance round, the hammer falls, leaving a doubt as to whether the plant is really sold. And so on.

Next to its distinctive smell, the most characteristic thing about the place is the company, which, although it must do so, from year to year never seems to change. There is the same enthusiastic lady seated at the table, and by her the same clergyman; the same dealers too, (very good fellows these, generally pleased to give an ignorant amateur a tip, or even to resign a plant to him, sometimes without profit, and this though he may be no customer of theirs). The same South American Orchid-merchant, in the same broad-brimmed hat, smoking the same eternal cigarette, watches the disposal of his consignment, but I am not sure that *he* would give anything to anybody. The same head gardeners, sent by their wealthy employers to bid for some rarity, stand about, wrapped in silence, or eyeing rival head gardeners; and the same consignments of plants lie in neat rows, or stand in pots, their flower stems sticked and wrapped with cotton wool, on the same rough tables. Everything is the same, except, alas! the head auctioneer. Ten years ago and later he was a man with a charming face, who looked the very picture of health, as I understood, Mr. Protheroe himself. One day going to the Rooms, however, and missing him, I inquired, and was told that he was suddenly dead—of heart-disease, I think.

The very first gentleman that I saw in the room on this particular day was a friend, who, when we last met a couple of years ago, told me that he had sold the great collection which he had inherited, and that nothing would induce *him* to have anything to do with Orchids. Then what does he here? I avow that his presence is suspicious, that men do not haunt such company for nothing, and accuse him flatly. He turns colour a little, mutters something about liking to see plants sold, and moves off to another part of the room, leaving me to form my own conclusions.

I walk round and look at the plants in company with Mr. Tracy, who seems to have known everyone of them from the seed. Especially do I look at certain yellow Cypripediums of sorts, including an Insigne Sanderæ, cherishing a secret hope, which I confide to Mr. Tracy, that as they are not in flower they may go cheap, cheap enough even for me. But Mr. Tracy shakes his learned head. "Seven to eight guineas," he says, and presently the first of them fetches seven and a half.

The auctioneer mounts the rostrum, chats a little with some acquaintances, then makes a sign.

"If you please, Sir," says the watching porter, pushing past with lot 1, and some ordinary Cattleya is put up and knocked down for twelve shillings. The next lot, an indifferent hybrid, fetches sixteen. Then a Lælia Diana, with seven bulbs, also a hybrid, fetches four and a half guineas; and a Catt. Germania Burbagensis seven and a half guineas. It is followed by a Catt. Iris Oculata and a Lælio-Cattleya Hyeana Magnifica, which bring eleven guineas apiece. Then comes a Cyp. Insigne, Harefield Hall variety, a tiny plant of two growths, that fetches five and a half guineas; and a Cyp. Leeanum Magnificum, also with two growths, for which somebody gives six and a half guineas. Or does he give it? I am by no means certain that this and many other of the plants are not passed, having failed to reach their reserve; at least, I cannot see or hear the bids, though these are so rapid that it is quite possible my apprehension is not quick enough to catch them.

Indeed, at these Orchid sales I have sometimes, when buying in person, almost found myself in the same position as did once an old gardener of mine, a most worthy man, but not distinguished for rapidity of thought or action. Him I once sent to a bulb-sale, with strict injunctions to buy certain lots that were marked on his catalogue, and to spend a certain amount of money. He returned, as he said, "fairly mazed," bearing many packages, but quite doubtful as to what he had expended on them. We examined the packages, which did not seem to tally with the marked lots. Then I discovered the truth. By the time that the old gentleman had seized the situation and got out his bid the auctioneer was generally one lot ahead, and to him who thought that he was buying Tulips would be credited Snowdrops, or Hyacinths, or anything except what he wanted.

To return. By this time I was certain that, although the company was smaller than usual, my hopes of bargains were doomed to disappointment. It was to be a dear sale. And dear it proved, indeed. Thus, lot 183, modestly announced as "Odontoglossum Crispum Raymond Crawshay, fine plant, two bulbs, one new growth," being one, I believe, of the blotched varieties, although I did not see the flower, fetched the trifling sum of two hundred and fifty guineas; whilst another Odontoglossum sold, I think, for one hundred and eighty guineas. I felt like a friend who took a fancy to some shabby old chairs at Christie's, and, making up his mind that he would buy them at a price not exceeding forty shillings apiece, devoted a day to that purpose. When they were knocked down for as many guineas he was quite aggrieved. I also wasted my day, for I did not buy a single plant. Indeed, I departed long before the end, to put myself out of temptation, for after about three hours of an Orchid sale the moral sense goes, and a man becomes capable of follies which subsequently it is not decent to recount at the domestic dinner table.

Where does all the money come from, I wonder? Are there really many people in these hard times who can afford to give hundreds and hundreds of pounds for a plant that they could put into their coat pocket, which may, and very likely will, go wrong or die, since a great number of Orchids deteriorate sooner or later, and all are liable to suffer from neglect or accident.

Supposing that the fires go out upon a night of hard frost, for instance! I have heard a horrible tale, which I believe to be true, of a gentleman, with a very valuable collection, who had words with his head gardener at such a season. The gardener went home, and the fire went out! Result, next morning—a thousand pounds' worth or so of blackened plants, only fit for the manure heap. When brought to account, the gardener said he was very sorry, but he had overslept himself, and no one could make up furnaces in his sleep. What, then, could this employer do? Objurgate that gardener for the rest of his life—that is all—or take to drink! But the other man, who went to a fresh situation, chuckling—oh! he should never be allowed to sleep again.

Moral: If you want to quarrel with the person in charge of the fire, do so in summer, or even autumn, but never—never—during the reign of a hard frost.

The time went on, and at length, in the second week of June, this gardener shook the dust of London off his feet, or, rather, wiped its mud off his boots, for it poured so furiously that he travelled to the station seated *on* his luggage inside a four-wheeler, since no portmanteau could have resisted that rain; and departed to spend a Sunday at Kessingland.

Never have I experienced such torrents as those pumped on to our devoted heads during the last days of my stay in London, in June 1903, that is, in England. Moreover, with the rain came the most bitter cold, following upon two tropical days at the beginning of the month. Truly, for most of the year ours is a vile climate, fit neither for man nor beast. Yet we thrive in it, for, like the majority of disagreeable things, it seems to be good for us. Imagine, then, my surprise when on driving out of Lowestoft I was met by blinding clouds of dust, and found all the country absolutely parched. Indeed, the croquet-lawn of my house at Kessingland was as brown as I have ever seen it at the end of a summer drought. A roaring easterly gale tore over sea and land, which gale, Bayfield informed me, dismally, had been blowing for about a month. Also, it had left its marks. Thus the Poplar trees, or, rather, large bushes, that grow along the garden wall had scarcely any foliage remaining on them, nothing but dead twigs and some melancholy leaves blackened by frost. Even the sturdy Tamarisks, which are supposed to stand anything, were cut down.

As for the cold, it was that of a particularly bitter January. Out of doors one must heap on all one's winter clothes and coats, and within cower over a large fire. In the parched flower garden things were trying to bloom, but practically, only the brave white Pinks succeeded in the attempt, nearly everything else was withered up by cold. The Kitchen garden, however, wonderful, to say, looked well, especially the Potatoes, which, on this stiffish soil, the drought seems to suit; moreover, they receive some shelter from the cutting wind, and here, upon the borders of the sea, actual frost is rare.

The Asparagus, as usual, is magnificent, and the little plants, reared from seed which I collected myself last autumn twelvemonth, are doing splendidly. Now they are set out on the flat, whence next spring they will be moved to permanent beds, of which, I think, there are enough to make four. My theory is that Asparagus from seed produced by plants grown upon the spot should flourish extraordinarily well in its native habitat, and I am anxious to put it to the test. Certainly, so far, nothing could look more vigorous than do these seedlings. On the Strawberries there was a good show of bloom, though if it will set in this weather I do not know. I noted that Bayfield had planted three or four Broad-beans under the lee of each Gooseberry bush, an ingenious dodge whereby they receive a certain amount of shelter.[1]

The Marum, as usual, is in the best of health, and has increased much this spring. Indeed, some of the little bunches which I planted five years ago are tussocks, a yard or more across, and the seeds that I sowed about the same time are making plants as thick as my wrist. I have discovered that this grass likes manure, although it is supposed to thrive in pure sand, and, indeed, does so. Last autumn some one kindly deposited a dead porpoise among mine, and I now observe that the tufts between which its remains lie, are greener and more vigorous than those out of range of its sweet influences.

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[1] A writer in *The Queen* kindly points out that I am wrong in my supposition. He says, "the object of sowing a few Broad-beans amongst Gooseberry bushes is to prevent the visits of the insect which lays its eggs on the latter plants, as they object to the scent of the bean flowers."

Our beach continues to widen, so that we have now a really magnificent stretch of sand—a neighbour of mine says that at a very low tide not long ago he paced a hundred and seventy-five yards. Six years since I doubt if we had sixty. The sight of this yellow Kessingland strand must make poor Lowestoft quite green with envy for there, alas ! the beach still continues to decrease.[1]

On Sunday, the 14th, the weather was even worse than what had gone before, for a furious easterly gale blew all day, and at night there was a sharp frost. On the 15th the rain came at last, a most heavy rain, the wind still holding to the east. On that day I returned to Ditchingham, to find that here also rain had fallen, the first for a long time, and the water stood about in pools. Still, it was not sufficient to make the drains work. At Geldeston, on my way, I saw a patch of Potatoes absolutely black and lying on the ground from the effect of Saturday's frost, but I was glad to find that ours growing in the sheltered Orchard and Old garden seemed scarcely to have been touched. On that Saturday morning seven degrees of frost were registered at Norwich, and in the parish of Pulham St. Mary, not far off, where much damage was done, the weather was said to be the most severe experienced in June for twenty years past. Within a period of three days in that month at Ipswich the maximum records of the thermometer varied by twenty-five degrees, namely, from eighty-four to fifty-nine, and the minimum by twenty degrees, from fifty-three to thirty-three. Surely this is unusual for the time of year—even in England.

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[1] Lowestoft beach has, I am glad to say, made up a little during the year 1904.—H. R. H.

Since I was last here the ordinary routine of garden work has gone on regularly from day to day, as it must if anything is to succeed. That is where English private gardens have the advantage over those in most other countries that I have visited, namely, in the regularity of the attention they receive, be they large or small, by which means alone they are able to hold their own against the rigours of our climate. In Britain this is possible because of the existence of a numerous body of men, more or less trained to gardening, who are always ready to take to this class of work for a moderate wage, and from year to year to persevere in it as a profession.

Also, although, of course, there are black sheep among them, our gardeners, on the whole, have the credit of being a very respectable and reliable body of men, who may be trusted to attend to their duties whether their masters are absent or present. So far as my experience goes, the same can be said of those of few other lands. Doubtless, here, competition keeps up the standard, since for any decent post of this sort there are always plenty of applicants. In farming work, as I think will be admitted by any readers of my book "Rural England," it is now otherwise. But the labour in a garden, although quite sufficient to satisfy most men, is by no means so severe as it is upon the land.

Further, it has many alleviations, and even pleasures, for those who care for their business, while a good man can always hope to rise to be head in some excellent situation, where he is both trusted and looked on with respect as a master of his trade. On a farm it is not so; a labourer he is, often under an employer not distinguished by gentleness or consideration for those who serve him, and a labourer at a very insufficient wage he must generally remain till he is thrust aside as useless. Nor is there any prospect of a pension, however small, for him, a boon which the good and faithful gardener often manages to secure in his old age.

I think, however, that in gardening, as in other trades, and more so than in many, the master makes the man. It is not in the grandest places where most money is spent that the best gardeners are always found, but rather, I believe, in those where the employer takes a lively, personal interest in what goes on from day to day, and is in constant consultation with his servant, or servants, how to attain the greatest measure of success of which his means and circumstances admit.

Thus, sympathy and co-operation are established, which are often lacking when the bond is one of money alone, and in their separate stations both strive together for a common end. In this matter they become friends, the link between them being the welfare of the plants and flowers in which they take an equal pride, and the result of that friendship is, on the part of the master, kindness and consideration, and, on the part of the man, service not of the lip and eye, but of the heart. Would that it were thus in every business.

Well, we have sown, and cleaned and cut and planted at the appointed times; we have sticked Peas, re-potted Tomatoes, liquid-manured fruit trees, bushes, and Roses, and done many other things, " too numerous to mention." On May 26 we began our bedding out by planting the Cannas on a warm border, finishing the business on June 3. On May 29 we cut away the flower-bank, as much of it as was required, and set up the wire arch by the Lawn pond. On June 1, thinking, in our blindness, that the frost was done with, we planted out the Dahlias that had been started in a house, some of them in the Old kitchen garden along the margin of the Yew-fence walk, and others by the ditch path in the Orchard. On the 2nd and 3rd we set out our seedling Pansies, and sprayed the Roses and fruit trees with a decoction of quassia chips. This we have found a most necessary precaution, as quassia is harmless to the foliage, and, at the same time, a deadly enemy to every blight and noxious insect. In the old days, when we neglected it, half our Roses were destroyed by the green caterpillars which roll themselves up in the leaves, and the rest much injured by aphis, but now these pests are far less common in the garden. On the 4th we moved a nice lot of Carnations, that we have reared from seed, to the Old Vinery border, put the hoe through the growing crops, and top-dressed the Pansies. On the 5th we dosed the Strawberries with liquid manure, planted out some Celery, prepared more trenches, and made sowings of Radish and Turnip seed.

On the 6th it was the turn of the Fig and Peach-trees to be visited by the manure cart, and to the latter we did some tying of the new wood. On Monday, the 8th, the lawns and other grass were mown with the pony, and the walks were weeded. On the 9th we sticked some of the herbaceous plants and again liquid-manured the Strawberries. Probably this will be their last dose, as I do not like dead-well stuff to be applied to them after the fruit has formed. Of course, it does not matter what the roots draw up from the soil, but people are apt to forget that the fluid will splash on to the plants and bed, and, in the absence of heavy rain, remain there longer than it should. I have heard of cases of persons anxious to obtain the finest possible Strawberries doing so at the cost of poisoning those who eat them; indeed a member of my family once got a dreadful throat from this cause, or so the doctors said. Nothing foul should be brought near to fruit that is to be consumed raw, or to such vegetables as Cress, Lettuces, and Radishes, for a long while before they are gathered.

On the 10th and 11th, in addition to our bedding-out operations, we transplanted Runner Beans, and set out Cauliflowers and Brussels Sprouts. Also, we trimmed the grass edgings of the walks. On the 12th we sowed Radishes, Lettuces, Chervil, and Mustard and Cress, liquid-manured the Raspberries, and re-potted the Fuchsias. On the 13th we again mowed the grass and, as it rained, took advantage of the opportunity to clean and arrange the greenhouses; while on the 15th, also a wet day, we cleared the Pond of weeds, an operation of which I shall have more to tell.

Such is the bare record of our proceedings during the first half of the month, but I should add that the Orchids also received attention at odd times. Thus, the Lælias Anceps have been re-potted, or rather, re-basketed. Of these beautiful plants I have some large specimens, one of them so heavy, indeed, that it takes two people to move it with any comfort. It has lived in a basket, which was specially made for it, for the last six or seven years, and, as it had overgrown the sides and was such a mat of roots that no new material could be top-dressed in, to our regret—since few gardeners like to be forced to interfere with such a plant—it became necessary to turn it out, cut away a quantity of the old pseudo-bulbs and withered roots, and replace it, reduced in size, in the same basket. This has been done, the roots of the great specimen and its fellows being found in excellent condition, although cramped and lacking material on which to feed. I fear that, as a consequence, we shall not have many flowers next winter, as the plants are sure to take a year to recover from the disturbance.

The success of Lælia Anceps as a greenhouse flower depends much upon the condition in which the imported roots are purchased in England. To begin with, they should be large, for it is the number of tall scapes in bloom at once that give such a wonderful effect to the show about Christmas time. Sometimes I have had thirty or forty of them, many bearing two and three star-like flowers, and then they seem to fill the whole end of the Intermediate house with a rich blaze of colour. The plants bought from florists are, of course, in good order and established, but since such people naturally break up the specimens to increase their stock, these do not, as a rule, consist of more than half-a-dozen or a dozen bulbs, or bear more than one or two flower-stems.

Another point is that the imported pieces should have been recently gathered, and remain well-leaved and full of vigour, for if they have been knocking about for months on mule-back, in the holds of ships, or in dealers' sheds, they take a long time to recover, if, indeed, they do not die outright. Of this I have had a recent experience, since some plants of L. Anceps, which I purchased, without seeing them, more than a year ago, are only now beginning to show signs of vitality, and probably will not flower till next Christmas twelvemonth. On the other hand, the specimens of which I have been speaking, that I bought myself from an importation at a sale of Messrs. Protheroe, being in first-class order, went away without a check, and bloomed abundantly the first season.

Notwithstanding the cold and wretched weather, I found the garden looking well on my return, and bearing but few marks of frost. All one side of a beech-tree, however, has been absolutely withered by it, as though scorched with fire. Curiously enough, this is the only tree of which the foliage has been thus affected. It is sad to visit the Orchard: everything looks flourishing there, and the Apples and Pears are growing vigorously; also, not one of the Ribston and Cox's Orange Pippin pyramids that I bought last autumn has failed to take hold. But my fears are fulfilled; on all these scores of trees and bushes there is scarcely a single fruit—the frost has killed them every one.

LAWN POND

Nor am I singular in this misfortune, for, so far as I can learn, there will be practically no Apples or Pears in the Eastern Counties this year, and I believe that the tale is much the same in other parts of England. It is very discouraging; more, to many it is a positive disaster.

In "Rural England" and elsewhere I have advocated the increase of fruit-growing in England, but such seasons as the present give me pause. Take my own humble case. The readers of these pages will know what pains we have taken with the trees and bushes, how we have dug and hoed and pruned and grease-banded and manured, and syringed with various mixtures, and stem-painted, &c.; and now, for reward, except on a few of the espalier trees, not a single fruit! Well, it is bad for me, but how about those who depend for their living upon the crop which no skill or care of theirs will avail to save?

The Lawn pond I find a more pleasant sight, for in its centre the Arum lilies have lifted their green leaves above the water, which here is three feet deep, and are blooming bravely. So, thus far, my experiment has succeeded, and they will stand the winter if planted deep enough, and actually thrive in water. Yet, oddly enough, I never remember seeing them thus in their native country, South Africa, where they always grow on swampy ground. It is strange that a plant should do equally well in a pot in the greenhouse, and sunk so deep in water that only the actual leaves and the flowers appear above the surface. Clearly, the Arum does not lack adaptability.[1]

The white Water-lilies are blooming also, and wonderfully beautiful they look floating amidst their round green leaves. If there is a lovelier flower I do not know it, or one that in shape and colour gives greater satisfaction to the eye. I regret to observe, however, mixed up with them other leaves of a more oblong shape. These belong to the common yellow Lily, as do the round, tight, green buds which I see appearing amongst them. At all hazards they must be got out, for I am told they are so vigorous that, if left undisturbed, they will kill every other plant, and in time usurp the whole pond. Also, my hybrids planted a year ago last March are thriving amazingly, for in five or six places I see patches of their red-veined leaves, two of which are already bearing flowers, beautiful yellow blooms, tinged here and there with rose, and larger than the common white. These plants were given to me, and, unfortunately, I do not know the name of this sulphur-coloured variety. The other hybrids are not yet in bloom.

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[1] I regret to have to add that in 1904 not one of these Arums has reappeared above the water. Whether they have rotted or been washed out of their pots I cannot say; at least they are gone.—H. R. H.

Round the edge of the pond I set some common yellow Flags, which were dug from the banks of the Waveney. In this rich soil they have grown like giants, and are simply covered with flower. They are most handsome, but I expect that another year they will need to be kept within bounds. Mason has cut away all the old Daffodil foliage on the Pond border, and, indeed, elsewhere. I only trust that this has not been done too soon, else the bulbs must suffer, but he says that it was yellow and drooping, and he is, I imagine, too careful a man to make such a mistake in zeal for mere tidiness.

The pink Mays are now in full bloom upon the front lawn (on June 15 !), and look very pretty, while in the garden border the Roses are beginning to make a show. In the Intermediate house the Cattleyas Mossiæ are still splendid, and there is one gorgeous object, a Cattleya Gigas Sanderiana, bearing eight of its splendid, wide-lipped and richly-coloured blooms, as fine a type as I have ever seen. This plant I bought about six years ago as an imported piece. In the following season, while still full of its native vigour, it bore six flowers, but from that day to this it has not bloomed again. In fact, so tired did I get of seeing it year after year growing well, but with never a sign of a sheath, that I nearly got rid of the specimen. However, as a final resource, early last summer, or before, I set it on the hanging shelf in the Warm orchid house, quite close to the glass, so that it should receive as much sun as possible, and left it there without re-potting or any other attention except the necessary watering. This treatment has done more than all my previous care, and I see the result of it in those eight magnificent blooms, which, indeed, are well worth the five years of waiting.

In this same house, however, I received two shocks. The first of them is the aspect of three of my fine Vandas, whereof many of the green, arching leaves are burnt as though by flame. Indeed, that is what has happened to them. Somewhere in the roof above—I wish I could find where—there must be flaws, which turn these particular panes into burning-glasses, with the result that the sun's rays focus themselves upon certain plants and shrivel them up. Possibly there is only one such flaw, and the cause of a number of plants being so affected is that at different hours of the day the rays from this wretched, but undiscoverable burning glass, concentrate themselves upon different points beneath. I remember that the same thing has happened in past summers. To guard against further mischief we have limewashed the roof beneath the roller lath-blind.

The second sad sight are two little withered sticks stuck amongst some crocks in a pot, in the hope—a vain one, I fear—that life may still remain in them. These are all that is left of what was a fine specimen of a pure white Cattleya Mossiæ. This plant, which was seen by him bearing a number of blooms, was secured for me, at no mean price, in Caracas by my brother, who was then British Minister to Venezuela. Most unhappily, when the members of his family returned home in the September of last year, some local expert told him that the plant must not be exported then, because it was in growth. When I heard this I was full of foreboding, knowing that, with care, it would have hurt it little to be moved. Afterwards the Venezuelan troubles arose, and my brother was ordered suddenly to Trinidad. He remembered the Orchid, and took it with him, but in the confusion and hurry it was left in the charge of some one at La Guayra. Whether the climate of La Guayra did not agree with it, or what treatment it received there, I know not, though my impression is that, when already much enfeebled, it was packed up wet. At least, this is how it has arrived, and—I will drop the subject.

The 16th was finer, though still cold. Several of the Iris roots that I bought in the spring and planted on the Pond border are blooming, which, as I have said, I did not expect. Very pretty they look with their various-hued flowers, though some of them are dingy to my taste—smoke-hued is the proper term. But, alas! they are not, I fear, true to name. Thus, Prince of Orange should surely have a yellow flower, not one of mingled purple and brown. However, this is mere supposition, in which I may be mistaken.

My single specimen of Saxifrage Pyramidalis Cotyledon has thrown up a noble spike of bloom, eighteen inches high, I should say, and carrying hundreds of tiny white flowers marked with pink, of which the general appearance, although they are smaller, is not unlike that of the common Hawthorn. From its green, many-branched stem also spring a multitude of tight little button-like buds. Altogether, this is a most graceful plant, and a wonderful laster, only, unfortunately, it seems to bloom and die. This would not matter so much had it produced any young offshoots, but there are none. From the S. Pyramidalis that flowered last year, however, which seems to be a slightly different species from Cotyledon, or so I judge by the foliage, I have secured a number of nice young plants, which although they are not of blooming size, are themselves producing more young. Thus, two which I picked off and plunged in a little pot nearly eighteen months ago have now multiplied to a dozen, so that in time I hope to work up a stock of the species. I am cutting off the bloom of the Cotyledon, thinking that, perhaps, thus I shall induce it to increase itself before it dies.

This evening I was hoeing the new Asparagus bed, and, notwithstanding the rain, find the ground still hard. There is a great art in hoeing. If you strike with too much force you soon jar your wrists. The thing is to give a moderate downward blow and then draw the instrument towards you, for thus you not only destroy, or, at any rate, check the weed aimed at, but break the surface of the surrounding soil as well. To-day we have been mowing the grass between the beds with the small machine, putting the hoe through growing crops and setting out winter Greens on land just cleared of young Potatoes, after it has been forked over and manured.

On the 17th it was raining again, although not very heavily, and the land being unfit to work, Knowles was employed in tugging out the tufts of grass which had sprung up on the new Orchard roadway by the ditch, since, owing to the stones, &c., placed there for a foundation, it is not feasible to use the hoe. The Ferns that I bought are now springing up nicely in the Rockery and elsewhere. They should make a good show in time, but will, I fear, need much watering in dry weather. On the Flower-garden border the royal red Poppies and the tall Foxgloves that are planted at intervals look very handsome indeed. I think that there are few more noble flowers than the Foxglove, of which the colours have been much varied and improved of late years.

The new drains on the lawn-tennis courts seem to be quite sufficient for their purpose. At any rate, no water lies there now, as it did last year. Indeed, notwithstanding the wet, the turf is hard enough to-day to allow of its being mown. These courts have a very good face on them this summer, the result of weeding, basic slag, and wood ashes, and of the seed scattered on in spring. But we have not quite got rid of the Dandelions and Plantains, which still rear their shameless heads here and there. The Buttercups, however, seem to have given up the game, and agreed that in future they will grow in places where they are less worried.

In the Cold greenhouse the glorious red and white Cacti are going over; it is a pity that these splendid flowers should be so fleeting. I remember once playing a little joke with one of them on a London friend, who had not made horticulture a special study. When accompanying me round the garden, I happened to say something about Potato flowers. He replied that he had never heard before that Potatoes did flower or show any signs of their existence above ground. I stated, gravely, that not only was this the case, but that some varieties were so pretty that we grew them under glass, where I should be happy to show him one. Then I exhibited a Cactus, bearing about half-a-dozen of its white and dazzling blooms. He was much interested, and said that his respect for the Potato was increased, and that the example proved that things could be beautiful as well as useful. But when the joke was explained he became quite cross, and said that I might think it funny, but *he* did not.

In this house there are also some very good Geraniums of different colours, bearing fine trusses of bloom; but I became so sick of Geraniums in my youth and during my first days in this garden, when, as it seems to me, people grew little else, that I seldom care to look at them now. Since writing the above, however, I have visited the South of Spain. There the Geraniums grow in bushes and hedges or trail over the walls like creepers. A more

GERANIUMS, ETC., IN GARDEN OF REINA CRISTINA HOTEL, ALGECIRAS, SPAIN beautiful sight than they presented during the month of April in the garden of that most charming of hotels, the Reina Cristina at Algeciras, I never beheld. Under such conditions the Geranium is indeed worth growing.

The Begonias are also beginning to flower under glass, but those that I saw at the Temple Show have quite put me out of conceit with my own, although I remember that a few years ago we thought their blooms magnificent. There are also a few fair Malmaisons, and an old Fuchsia plant, that I have had for many years, which is now covered with its white and purple bells.

In the Cool orchid house two plants of Anguloa Clowesii are out, each of them bearing two flowers. In their way these are among the most remarkable of Orchids, chiefly because they differ so widely from any other species. The plant is a noble one, with its tall green pseudo-bulbs and broad leaves, and the flower even more difficult to describe than usual. The natives of Colombia call it *El Torito*, as they consider it like a bull's head, and among amateurs it is known as the Cradle orchid, because of its globular shape and of the lip, which, if the stem is shaken, rocks within. This represents the baby, but if any infant were thus oscillated in its cradle, its career, however merry, would certainly be short. For the rest, the flower is of the size of a tulip, very solid and wax-like, and a beautiful yellow in colour.

Another Orchid that is in flower here is Epidendrum Parkinsonianum, of which I grow several plants, all raised from one specimen, that I have owned since I returned from Mexico about thirteen years ago, which specimen, by the way, is still in full health and vigour. This Orchid has a pendulous growth, with fleshy, oblong leaves that come to a point, and the flowers, which generally appear in pairs, are thick in substance and starry in shape, and from ivory white turn to yellow with age, lasting a long while in beauty. It is easy to grow, and requires little attention and re-potting, or so, at least, I have found.

Here, too, there are a few fine flowers on some of the Catt. Mossiæ imported from Venezuela last year. One of these is very distinct, more like a C. Schröderæ than a Mossiæ, and I have no doubt that a grower would honour it with a name to itself. The Cœlogynes are growing well and throwing up fine shoots after their rest, which in time will become pseudo-bulbs. The Cypripediums Insigne and their kin flourish likewise, and, although their bloom is over, look green and pleasant with their long, strap-shaped leaves. Indeed, there is but one Cypripedium in flower here now, a belated C. Lathamianum of a very good type. Also that quaint plant Masdevallia Macrura is out. There is a certain fascination about its brown hue, pearly-centre, and long, evil-looking tails.

In the Warm orchid house there is now a fine show of Cyp. Callosum while the dark, impressive Cyp. Barbatum and Cyps. Rothschildianum and Stonei are throwing up for flower, but the Cyps. Grande make no sign, nor do my two plants of Cyp. Caudatum, although their health seems to be of the best. The Spider orchid, Brassia Verrucosa Grandiflora, of which I have two fine specimens, has done grandly this year, but is now going over.

The 18th has been a dull, cold day. We spent it in netting the Strawberries by means of a framework of scantlings, over which the net is stretched at a height of about four feet from the ground, thus enabling the picker to walk about beneath. This netting is a long and arduous task, and, indeed, employed all hands for the rest of the week. Were it not done, however, we should not get a single fruit; it is the price we pay for the presence of our feathered friends. Our Strawberries are not yet red, although in some neighbouring gardens a few have been gathered, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, a fact which I would scarcely believe until I saw and ate them.

When hoeing in the Orchard this evening I found the ground somewhat softer after the rain, but, being so new, it is still lumpy. Also, it sticks on the hoe in the most annoying manner. There is still plenty of twitch in this land, nor can it be got out by hoeing. That must be done with the fork. It is wonderful to notice how weeds take shelter in any place where they think they are not likely to be disturbed—the heart of a Strawberry plant, for instance. How they revel in the rich-manured soil also, making the very best of their time—till death, in the shape of a hoe, strikes them suddenly.

On the 19th, although it was still raining pretty smartly, the fall having begun in the middle of the day, I set to work to fork up a piece of the Orchard land, an arduous task while the soil was so wet. In forking or digging, unless the ground is to be gone over twice, first one way and then the other, it is, of course, necessary to barrow the first spit and lay it up at the end of the piece to be treated, so that there may be soil with which to fill in the last trench. This is a point that amateurs are apt to forget.

The numbers of little pyramids planted in this Orchard make it uncommonly awkward to dig, since, when a tree is approached, one must work round it and yet preserve the line, and care is necessary lest the shallow roots should be cut. Further, the digger must beware lest when he gets near to a bush he should back on to it and break the young shoots. I do not think that it will be possible to cultivate this Orchard for garden crops for more than another three years, after which it must be given up to the trees, that will need all the space. As it is, the bush Pears, worked on the Quince stock, which were planted three years ago, are many of them now seven feet high, though some of the sorts grow but slowly.

When I am labouring alone in the Orchard a certain robin is my constant companion. He arrives as soon as I begin to dig, and watches from a tree close by. Presently a worm or an ants' nest is turned up, and down he comes to within a foot or two of me, and eats and eats and *eats.* Heavens! how he does eat. It is marvellous that his little body can contain so many things which crawl and wriggle. But somehow they vanish, and even when he is so replete that he can scarcely fly, a nice fat worm still tempts him sorely.

He stands over it, and, holding his head upon one side, contemplates it with his beady eye, then, as it is retreating among the clods, pulls it out and makes a wild attempt to swallow that worm. Useless—there is no more room. He stretches and shakes himself, and tries again, only to fail afresh. Then he seizes it by the middle, and, in despair, flies away with it to a hedge, to present it, perhaps, to his sitting mate with a large air of unselfish generosity. There is great company in a robin; he is such a very human bird; and certainly a creature that can devour so much noxious live stock should be encouraged.

A new Iris is out by the Pond, which is labelled Gracchus. It is yellow, with purple-veined standards. Notwithstanding the bitter nor'-east gale, the Tropæolums are growing well over the wire arch, and the yellow Flags look really splendid.

On Saturday, the 20th, it poured with rain and was fearfully cold, but during all this wet the total fall here was under two inches, barely enough to cause the drains to trickle a little. Indeed there has not been sufficient to make the new one into the Garden pond, of which I have written, work at all. In the Fig house one of the front line of Tomatoes that are planted in the ground, which is well set with fruit, has suddenly withered. Mason and I pulled it up this morning suspecting wire-worm or some other insect, but found none for the root was quite undamaged.

On cutting the stem longitudinally with a sharp knife, however, we discovered a brown line running the entire length of the stalk, and confined to one side only. It was as though a current of electricity had passed down it, or, possibly, something had tapped the stem below ground, and thus prevented the sap from rising in all the corresponding cells above.

We had a sharp frost last night (on June 20!); indeed, there are said to have been from six to twelve degrees in different parts of Great Britain and Ireland, and that enormous damage has been done throughout the country to all growing crops. On my own farm a field of Potatoes has turned quite black.

A fine specimen of Lælia Grandis Tenebrosa has come out in the Intermediate house. It is a beautiful flower, with its rich, purple cup and chocolate-hued sepals. Also there is a nice Thunia Bensoniæ, bearing a large bunch of purple bloom, but I much prefer the white variety, which I also grow. In the Cool orchid house a white Anguloa is now in bloom, but the flower is not so large as that of A. Clowesii. It is labelled A. Watsonæ, but seems to me very like A. Uniflora.

The frost last night, or more probably the long spell of icy weather, is responsible for a sad tragedy in the porch, where a pair of swallows have nested for many years; indeed, I believe for generations. They had hatched their young; and now we have found all five of them lying dead upon the ground, whither they were thrown out of the nest by the parents. I believe that the poor little things died of starvation, as their crops seem to be quite empty. Doubtless, during the cold there were no insects about, so the old birds could not feed them. I feared that these would desert the nest, but within a day or two they were busy building up its edge rather higher and in general house-cleaning, doubtless with a view of preparing it to receive more eggs.

Birds are practical creatures, and get over these domestic griefs very quickly. I remember a year or two ago that Mason removed a nest full of nearly-fledged sparrows from the Honeysuckle on the east side of the house (which, by the way, is now a sheet of bloom). During the process the parents flew about in an extremity of distress, but it is a fact that within an hour of the decease of their family I saw those identical sparrows commencing to rebuild their nest in the same place. This has been a terrible year for the swallows and martins, of which thousands have perished in the cold. In a neighbour's house also the poor starved things have actually taken refuge in the rooms for warmth.

At last we have finished netting the Strawberries.

On Sunday, the 21st, the weather was still bitter, so much so that I did not care to linger in the garden, but took refuge in the houses. Here I witnessed another encounter between a spider and a bumble-bee, only the end was different to that which I have already described. When the bumble-bee, which I was trying to catch, as these insects do much mischief by fertilising the Orchid blooms, and thus causing the flowers to wither prematurely, fell into the web, the spider rushed at him and began to tie up his legs. To do this it ran continually back to the centre of the web, whence it always returned, apparently with a fresh rope, though perhaps it was really engaged in fixing one of its cords, that it had already wound round the bee's legs, to this central point. The bee struggled furiously, and it was curious to see how, whilst keeping out of reach, its enemy managed to continue the binding process.

But it was too strong for the spider; the filaments of the web began to give, and soon it became evident that it would break away. When the spider saw how the case stood, but before the bee had freed itself, quite suddenly it abandoned its frantic activity, climbed quietly to the centre of its broken web, turned its back upon the bee as though it were unworthy of further notice, and to all appearance became lost in contemplation. Meanwhile, with an angry buzz, the bee had fallen to the staging beneath, where I secured it and put it out of the house. Poor thing! It must have had a very anxious time. By the way, the bumble-bee, I believe, has no sting, yet I observed this one continually try to strike the spider with its tail, which elongated itself very much.

Monday, the 22nd, was a fine day at last. I see that the Figs in the house are doing better this year than they have ever done before, and bearing an excellent crop of fruit. When I planted these Figs seven or eight winters ago I removed the earth to a depth of three feet, and put in a concrete floor, building a brick wall up to within an inch of the surface, also about three feet from that on which the Figs were to grow, and thus forming a trench impervious to their roots. Figs, it is well known, always make less wood, and bear better if they are thus confined. Now, I suppose, they have filled the trench, and that this year's good crop is the consequence. Something may be due also to our continual applications of liquid manure.

To-day we have been engaged in clearing the Lawn pond of weeds by means of a rake, a troublesome and somewhat endless business, also in cutting out the leaves and flowers of the yellow Lilies from among the white ones, in the hope that we may thus bleed and weaken their roots, a *quite* endless business, for as fast as we cut more appear. This we do by means of a long rose-clipper, with a spring that grips and severs the stem of the leaf or flower. Mason managed to drag out the pot containing one of the new Nymphæas, which we thought must be dead, as no little red leaves have appeared floating on the water. To our joy we find that the crown is quite alive and shooting, but it is a tiny piece.

When we had finished our raking and snipping we set out some Phlox on the border, also a few Dianthus. On the night of the 22nd we had yet another frost. Really this is getting beyond a joke. The vagaries of the British weather are trying, especially to one who, like myself, spent a good slice of his early life in a place that, whatever its drawbacks, at least has a climate—South Africa.

The most important events on June the 23rd and 24th were that, on the former of these two days, we ate our first green Peas and our last dish of Asparagus that, on the whole, has not been very good this year, and on the latter gathered our first Strawberries, which promise to be a bountiful crop. They were a mixed lot, taken from those plants on which any fruit was ripe. On the 25th a burst of summer weather began, and not before it was wanted, since, with the exception of June 1st and 2nd, we have as yet experienced no really warm days. The 26th, 27th, and 28th, and, indeed, to the end of the month, the weather remained beautiful. On the last-named day—a Sunday—the thermometer in my study at midnight showed 75 degrees, whereas little more than a week before we were visited by six degrees of frost. There is variety for those who like it!

On the 25th we began to gather Laxton-Noble Strawberries regularly. Amongst other jobs during this last week of the month we went through our little bit of shrubbery, trimming back the evergreens and cutting out all the dead wood that we could find. It is wonderful how soon a place begins to look untidy and overgrown if this be neglected. These evergreens were planted nearly a century ago—or so I understand—therefore there are among them none of the beautiful flowering shrubs which are now becoming common. This, however, does not greatly matter, as here stand too many oaks and other trees to allow such things to flourish in their shade.

Once I suffered myself to be persuaded to plant a bed of really good shrubs on an open slope of the Sunk-walk, but the shadow of a neighbouring Beech proved too much for them, and after three or four years every bush had to be dug up again. Most of them I reset in front of the ancient cottages by the Back-drive gate, which were once part of some old manor-house. Here, notwithstanding the shade of the Walnut trees, that probably enough were planted there by its forgotten owners — even their names are lost — some of them have done fairly well. So it comes about that we must be content with such things as the common Laurel and a few Syringas; nor need we grumble over-much, seeing that when these are kept well clipped the effect of their dark-hued foliage, growing like green walls on either side of the low turf path, is really very satisfactory.

Other tasks, in addition to the eternal lifting of Potatoes, setting out of winter Greens, manuring trenches for Peas, sowing of Turnip seed, &c., were the cleaning of the Orchard ditch, down which runs the overflow from the drainage, a very necessary if a somewhat smelly task at this time of year, as otherwise it gets choked up; and the marking out of the croquet and lawn-tennis courts, which it has now become possible to use. This always requires a certain amount of care and calculation, especially where scientific croquet is concerned and the ground is not quite full size, which means that everything has to be reduced to scale. In the case of the lawn-tennis, however, matters are much facilitated by the pegs and angle irons which are left *in situ* in the turf, and can easily be discovered by prodding for them.

To mark out a court, by the way, requires a steady hand and great care, even with the machines which are now common. If these qualities are lacking, the result is many ugly and meaningless splotches of whitewash, which confuse the players, and, being so thick, will not wear out for weeks.

JULY

The other day I sat a while on the seat beneath the new Lawn-pond arbour. Really, I consider the planting of this pond the most successful gardening enterprise that I have ever carried through. Yet my family, with the extraordinary conservatism for which their sex is remarkable in youth, protested vigorously when I dragged out several dead and rotting Hawthorn trees that had been blown into the water, and replaced a particularly straggling live fence, half of which had been eaten by cattle, with a neat, iron railing, painted a nice green. In vain do I point to the results; they still protest.

The morning was beautiful, and I wore a straw hat, an interesting fact which I mention because it was the first time this season that I had felt the slightest need for such head-gear. On the still surface of the pond floated the Water-lilies, white and cream-hued, by the dozen, while from one to another of their round leaves flitted the azure dragon-flies. In the centre the tall white cups of the Arums swayed a little in the gentle wind. All around its edge the yellow Flags stood stiff and stately, mingled with curious feathery reeds and grasses; whilst here and there amongst them the flat and noble blooms of Iris Kæmpferi, pure white and perfect blue, lifted their lovely heads towards the sun.

Everywhere about me stretched a study painted by the brush of Nature in different hues of green—the sombre green of the Ivy on the house, which, after some thirteen years of growth, at length it covers; the bright green of the Oaks; the dark green of the big Chestnut by the gate; the green of the Beeches, darker yet; the

ROSE BORDER, STABLE GARDEN

reddish green of the Walnuts; the other greens of Elms and Limes, almost similar in colour, but the latter, to my eye, touched with a tinge of blue; the fresher green of the Hawthorns, still flushed with fading pink; and, lastly, the pervading green of the lush grass; amongst all of which the rich hues of the young copper Beeches appear like purple blots. On such glorious days and in such surroundings, I am indeed thankful that fortune has not made me a permanent inhabitant of the London streets.

The Elm-tree border is very pretty just now. Especially do I admire the clumps of Geranium Ibericum, with their large, dark-veined, purple blooms. I consider this Geranium one of the most beautiful perennials that we have in the garden, and mean to increase my stock. The blue Delphiniums, or Larkspurs, are very handsome also; I wish that I had more of them. Then there is a white Campanula, with single flowers, not a very high-growing species, but extremely pure and graceful; and Centaureas, blue and white, that I brought here from Kessingland. Among these appear low shrubs of Veronica, with their dark-green, formal-looking foliage. They are named Wardiensis and Monticula, but their bunches of little white flowers with purple stamens are so like each other that it would be difficult to tell the difference. These Veronicas are very easy to increase by pegging; indeed, the bottom branches often root themselves.

Mason and I have come to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to remove the low fence that edges the pond-ditch near this bed, slope it down, and plant the sides with Saxifrages and Ferns. Also, I think, as I believe I said, that some of the hardy Cypripediums, such as C. Spectabile, would thrive here, as, except in rainy times, the ditch is dry. I know, however, that they do not like to be entirely submerged by water, so perhaps it would be best to plant the Ferns at the bottom of the ditch and the Cypripediums up its sides.

We find it almost impossible to keep the birds—especially the blackbirds—away from the Strawberries. They must hunt round the nets until they find a crack or a hole, then wriggle themselves in. And, once in, what a time they have! If they were content to eat up what fruit they want and be done with it, it would not so much matter. But this is just what they will not do. On the contrary, they hop from berry to berry, picking a hole in the ripest of each, until they are so full that they can scarcely struggle to escape when the hour of retribution comes. I always try to let them out, little as they deserve it, but a certain number get entangled in the nets and perish there—poor greedy things.

It is now so warm that actually one can sit out after dinner. At no time does the garden look more beautiful than in this hour of the dying day. Now the hush of the night is a thing that may be felt—it is so deep. No leaf stirs upon the trees, no bird sings. The bats flitter and wheel, the moths fade past, the belated humble-bee, or it may be a beetle, drones its way homewards. Out yonder over the lawn appears and disappears a white and ghostly shape, that of a hawking owl. This is all: the rest is sleep and silence; while above, in the blue, the planets spring out singly. Now darkness comes, and the tall, many-coloured rods of the Foxglove gather one hue of grey; the golden Iris flowers gleam like fallen stars about the borders, and the gloom is heavy with the odour of Verbena, of Roses, and of the flowering Laurel. It is well to enjoy such nights while one can, for they are few in England.

As is common upon newly broken-up turf land, the wire-worm is still doing us much damage in the Orchard. They have now entirely destroyed several rows of Spinach and greatly injured the Onions. Mason and I pulled up some of these, and there at their roots were the yellow-jacketed wretches, so tough of skin that one can scarcely destroy them between the thumb and finger. I believe that they are the grubs of the daddy-long-legs, but what useful part they play in the economy of Nature is more than I can guess. On such an extent of ground to trap them in the ordinary way with rape-cake, which they will eat till they burst, or in any similar method, is out of the question. The only thing will be to treat this ground with gas-lime in the autumn. They do not seem to have done much hurt to the Potatoes, Beans, Cabbages, and Peas — Onions and Spinach are what they like.

About four years ago I planted two Mulberry trees in this Orchard, and was somewhat pained when I received the bill for them, for they cost nine shillings each. At the time I wondered why they were so much more expensive than any other sort of tree, but now I think I see the reason. Their growth is exceedingly slow; although quite healthy, mine have increased but little in size during these four years, so I suppose that it takes a long time to rear them. Oddly enough, in Italy, Cyprus, and Syria, I have noticed that Mulberries grow very fast indeed, but perhaps the difference of climate accounts for this variation in their habit. Or is it because the sort we plant, Morus nigra, I think, is less rapid in its increase than the white Mediterranean kind (Morus alba), raised for its leaves, on which silk-worms are fed?

We have been planting out Celeriac in the Orchard, which, as this vegetable is turnip-rooted, is done upon the flat and not in trenches. In order to protect it from the wire-worm—or try to do so—we first steeped the young plants in a very strong solution of soot-water, and, after they are in place, watered well to start them.

About a year and a half ago I wrote to a gentleman in an official position in Colombia, asking him if he could procure me a consignment of Odontoglossum Crispum, but at that time one of the perennial South American wars was in progress, and nothing could be done. Now he has most kindly written to me to say that he has an offer from a collector of five hundred plants at ten cents—that is, fivepence each. These are more than I need, but as I can easily exchange or dispose of the balance, I have asked him to accept it. As a sample, he sent me a score, tied on to a spline with string, which have arrived through the good offices of Messrs. Cowan, the well-known Liverpool Orchid-importers, but, I am sorry to say, in very bad condition. Indeed, I think that only three of them are alive, and Messrs. Cowan inform me that most of theirs are in a similar case. If all the five hundred prove to be like this I shall have made but a bad bargain, but they will have been collected at a different time, and we must hope for the best.

I am removing my second plant of Masdevallia Macrura from the Intermediate house into the Cool orchid house, as, although it is part of the same specimen, it does not thrive anything like so well as its brother that lives there. Perhaps its situation in the Intermediate house is too shady for its needs; at any rate, that in the Cool orchid house, which flowers so abundantly, gets a great deal of sun.

We shut up the houses fairly early now, before five o'clock, damping them down at the same time, so that the sinking sun may warm them up for the night. Except on very hot days, however, we have to keep a little fire, for this is a most treacherous season, and the winds are often exceedingly cold. It does not do to let plants get a check while they are growing, as will sometimes happen if the thermometer drops ten degrees at night.

Notwithstanding my removal of its bloom, the Saxifrage Pyramidalis Cotyledon has turned brown, and is deceasing after the provoking manner of its kind. Worse still, there is no sign of a family; having bloomed, it seems to think that it has fulfilled its mission. The flower, by the way, seems to last almost as well in water as it does on the plant.

By the drive gate stands the farmhouse, an old and not unornamental building, that is, in front; but the plain and windowless brick wall at the back, past which the drive runs, has no attractions. In some former generation this fact was appreciated, and a number of Yews were planted as a screen. Elms and Beech were planted also, some of which I cut out about twenty years ago, heading down the spindly Yews that grew in their shade. They have improved a little since then, but never really recovered, although to some extent they serve their purpose. Or, rather, they did serve it, for now trouble has arisen. The sink drain from the farm, having become blocked, it was necessary to make investigations, when we found that the roots of one of the Yew trees have entirely broken up the pipes beneath, which, by the way, had never been trapped, in such a fashion that to do anything with them it was necessary to cut down one Yew.

Indeed, had I not stopped them, the men would have taken a second also, for workmen are terribly destructive in this respect. Thus never shall I forget my fury, when once, to save himself a little trouble, a painter deliberately hacked through a stem of Ivy on the front of the house, leaving a patch of wall and dead leaves, which it took some years to re-cover with green growth. As it is, a hideous gap is left where the Yew tree stood, exposing the bare farm wall to every one who passes up the drive.

I have been consulting with Mason, and we have decided that there is only one thing to be done—to remove the Yews altogether this autumn—that is, if we find time—and replace them with something else.

The question is—what, for the aspect is north, with a little west, and although it gets some light and sun, the spot is considerably overshadowed by trees. My idea is that we might plant Ivy of the pretty golden-leaved variety along the back of the house, and in front of it form a bank of such shrubs as do not object to shade.

But what are those shrubs? People say this and that, but my experience is that nearly all of them refuse to flourish without sun and air. Aucuba is an exception, however, so, although I do not particularly care about them, Aucubas, I fear, it will have to be, only this time I must remember to obtain some male plants, since, if that is neglected, as it often is, they will not bear their handsome berries. An alternative, and this would be prettier, is to make another hardy garden here. But such gardens require attention, weeding, watering, manuring, &c., especially where there are tree roots in the neighbourhood, and my limited staff has already as much on hand as it can manage. Indeed, friends have sometimes marvelled in my hearing that we accomplish what we do.

Another task that, all being well, we shall have to undertake in the autumn, is the entire rearrangement of the Lilies in the pond.

I believe that the spring is the best time to do this, but I want to get the job over while we can still see the leaves and know one plant from another. The hybrids are growing so vigorously that they must have more room, and this can only be furnished to them by shifting, and in some instances doing away altogether with the large and spreading clumps of common white Lilies. With these hybrids was sent to me a variety which is also white, but produces larger blooms, with many more petals. It is now increasing much in size, and my hope is ultimately, by division, to give up to it all the surface now occupied by the common whites. I think that this sort must be either N. Alba Plenissima or N. Alba Maxima.

Moreover, war will have to be waged against two plants which I purchased and carefully set here last year—Villarsia or Limnanthemum Nymphæoides (ye Gods, what a name!), and Stratiotes Aloides, called the Water-soldier, because of its sword-shaped leaves. Already I heartily wish that I had never seen either of these species. The Villarsia produces leaves like a small Water-lily and quantities of delicate flowers with a yellow corolla about the size of a Marsh Marigold. Undoubtedly, it is a charming aquatic, but it does not grow, it literally gallops across the pond. First it throws out runners like a Strawberry plant, then the runners throw out roots, which in their turn produce more runners. One more season of it and, if left unchecked, I am convinced that Villarsia Nymphæoides and Stratiotes Aloides, having killed out the Lilies and every living thing, including the weeds, would be engaged in a life and death struggle as to which of them should have the pond to itself. (I put my money upon Villarsia.)

For Stratiotes Aloides goes on in much the same way, only with a difference. In shape it is something like a small Aloe, and for most of the year seems to live submerged under the water, above which its sword-shaped leaves appear in the spring, while at this season it bears a delicate white bloom. From a kind of tap-root it emits other little white roots, but whether or no these fix themselves in the mud I am not sure. I think not, as the plant seems to float about and crop up in all sorts of places, and is very easily removed with a rake. It appears to increase itself by throwing out young plants around the base of the parent, much as a House-leek and some of the Saxifrages do, but very possibly it seeds also. At any rate, the process goes on with great rapidity, for last spring year I had only seven or eight plants, and now there are some hundreds. It is my intention next autumn to present my neighbours with all the Villarsia Nymphæoides and Stratiotes Aloides that I can get out, wherewith to adorn their ornamental waters. I have no doubt that when I have done so I shall still have plenty left for myself.

Among my plants on the Pond border is a graceful rush, which bears very pretty heads of pink bloom. This rush I have just discovered growing wild in a dyke in one of my marshes, but there seem to be but two clumps of it, the only ones that I remember having seen in this neighbourhood.

On July 1, a glorious day, we were engaged in wheeling manure from the pony yard to the Orchard, to be dug in for winter greens, and in liquid-manuring the Raspberry canes, Peach and Fig trees, and the Asparagus-beds, especially the young one at the end of the Orchard. Now, the tank that I dug in the bottom of the ditch here comes in useful, since, although it is eighty yards or so from the mouth of the drain, the stuff from this running down the ditch always keeps it full, and is of a character quite rich enough to be very nutritious to plants.

To-morrow is the Norwich Rose-show, but, alas! I have no Orchids worth sending, as my Cattleyas Mossiæ are practically over. I do not quite know why this should be, since I remember that three years ago, and I think upon another occasion, there were still enough of them in bloom to enable us to send a collection, for which a special prize was awarded. As we do not keep the houses hotter now than then, I can only suppose that this difference in the blooming period is due to the variation in the seasons. Perhaps in that of 1903, cold as it may be, we have been favoured with more sun in the earlier part of the year, which, of course, would force the plants.

I remember that when I first began to send Orchids to these shows, my late old gardener, whom we will call "A.," objected. He was not accustomed to that kind of thing, and appeared to have no rooted confidence in the judges, whom so many of his class believe to be influenced by considerations other than those of the merits of the exhibits. At length he yielded to my arguments, adding, "Well, I dare say, like other gentlemen, *yew would like to see your name in print for once.*" For such he conceived to be the real object of this new departure! I must say that it struck me as strange that he should have been in my service for nearly twenty years and yet remain unaware that my name *had* appeared in print—occasionally.

Certainly he was, and still is, a curious character. Once, during the prevalence of some very hot weather, we had grave differences of opinion as to the amount of air that should be allowed to the Cypripediums. A dozen times a day I would go and open the door of the house, whereupon the old gentleman, watching from afar, would appear so soon as my back was turned and shut it up again. At length the inevitable row arose, and it was loud and long. It ended thus:

"A.," in tones of pitying contempt: "Well, hev your own way. It ain't no use a speaking to yew more'n a child. I say it ain't no manner of use a speaking to *yew*!"

"A." was no believer in the other sex, whom he looked on as utterly irresponsible creatures, with pronounced evil tendencies, who picked his flowers, and were everlastingly clamouring for vegetables that he had forgotten to grow. Still, he recognised that such beings were entitled to the pity of their superiors, although, certainly in his case, that pity was not akin to love. Some female delinquency was under discussion, when suddenly he drew himself up and, waving an empty flower-pot, enunciated an aphorism that has become famous in certain local circles.

"They can't think like we; I say them there womens can't think, but don't *yew* be hard on 'em"—a pause, then, with a burst of conviction—"*They does their best, po'r things!*"

Somehow this immortal saying, when repeated in argument, always produces irritation, even among those classes of the "po'r things" who consider themselves to be endowed with powers of reflection. Between "A." and the genus maid-servant, also, there was a smothered, but perpetual, war. I remember that one of the latter, who had been caught picking his pet flowers, waited upon me, in a condition of flurry and indignation that might have been called hysterical, and told a rambling tale.

"Well," I said at length, "what did he do to you?"

"Do, Sir? Why, he came sneaking through the door and swore at me like a lion."

Also, the old fellow, who was sincerely attached to my interests, thought it necessary to keep an observant eye upon the female part of the establishment when I was away from home, and to treat me on my return to many a dark innuendo.

"Ah!" he said to me once. "*Yew* don't know what goes on when *yew* ain't here" (unfortunately, I cannot reproduce the high-pitched Suffolk accent of two generations gone that made his speech almost unintelligible except to myself and a few others). "*Yew* don't know *half* of what goes on." Then, with the usual burst, "Why, how should *yew* when yew're across the sea? It ain't to be expected. But———"—and his voice lowered—"many's the night I've come up here and seed a bicycle a'standing agin that there wall," and he pointed to the spot, "and, mind *yew*," and it sank to a mysterious whine, "that there bicycle didn't come alone. I say as there wor' a chap what rode that there bicycle!" and, looking behind him cautiously, he melted into the recesses of the stoke-hole.

But if old "A." disliked and distrusted women—persons whom he thought were never after any good—still more did he dislike boys, whom he described generically as a "torment." A friend used to bring her little son to stay here, a buoyant youth, who sent tennis-balls through the Peach house and jumped over—or into—the flower-beds. On one occasion his mother thought it necessary to apologise for some of his performances to old "A." He listened in lofty silence, then said, condescendingly:

"Don't say no more, ma'am, don't say no more. I knows him" (*burst*), "he's one of them sort to *whom mischief is a pleasure!*" Then, satisfied with his aphorism, he departed, leaving the lady crushed.

Once there was scandal in the place. An old fellow, who was then working in the garden, was employed in carrying sacks of coke to be stored for the use of the basement stove. Unfortunately, there stood on a table in the pantry an old Dutch flagon, containing about a quart of whisky. Well, coke-carrying is thirsty work, and by the time it was finished that flagon of whisky was finished also. Now, even the most seasoned cannot carry a quart of raw Scotch without showing signs thereof, and old "A." was ordered to investigate the matter. He investigated, and in due course reported—thus:

"I goes to Ezekiel, who fared all mazed like, and I sez to him, ''Zekiel, what hev yew been a duing of this afternoon?' He looks at me with a kind of grin, and sez, 'Duing, yew old fule, I've been a cleaning out the gutters on the top of the house.' 'Cleaning out the gutters? Who tould yew to clean out them gutters, and how did yew get to them there gutters without a ladder? And why do yew clean out gutters when there ain't nothin' in 'em to clean?' Then he turns round and sez, 'I tell yew I've been a cleaning out them gutters, and a wunnerful hot job it war, too; it made me feel right dizzy.' Then I sez to him, 'Yew ain't got no wings, 'Zekiel, yew can't fly, and I've got the key of the ladders. I don't believe yew was a cleaning out of them there gutters. I believe yew was a cleaning of yourself out with that there whisky, and yew ain't dizzy, *yew're drunk!*' That's what I sez to him, but he only laughs silly like and keeps on a turning round and round" (*burst*), "I believe that he lied, and, what's more, he knowed he lied. I believe he drunk that there whisky! And I wonder what he feels like now, that I du."

One more tale of inebriety. Going on a certain evening to the farm-buildings near the garden, I found one of my carters, who had been employed taking beasts to a local show, lying in the waggon house, to all appearance nearly dead, and muttering that he had been kicked by a horse and that his leg was broken. Much alarmed, I summoned the wise "A." in consultation. He came; he hovered about the corpse, for such by now it seemed to be! then he kicked it, softly at first, and afterwards harder. Next, having first worked the leg up and down to see if it was really broken, he knelt down and smelt my retainer's mouth with long, inspiring sniffs. Then he rose, stood a while lost in thought, dusting his knees, and delivered himself:

"I don't believe that Joseph's dead, nor as no horse hain't kicked him. I believe he's dead drunk!" Then a pause, and the burst, uttered in tones of deepest sympathy, "And, Lord! won't he catch it from his old woman when he gets home!" So we covered the erring one with sacks and left him for the night.

But I must stop these stories, although in truth I am not sorry to have the opportunity of recording a few specimens illustrative of my old friend's quaint character, the like of which we do not meet nowadays. At names by the way he was never good, Thus to him the Countess Pompadour apple was always the

"County Pit-a-Pat"; aphis fly were "appleites," so named by him, perhaps, after some pestilent and numerous Old Testament tribe, cousins, probably, to the Amalekites; and pseudo-bulbs were "Zulu-bobs," with which he understood I had become familiar in my youth.

Well, he is a most worthy old gentleman, and, in addition to his long and faithful service, has certainly afforded me much amusement.

To return from a digression, for which I hope I may be forgiven, the old Portugal laurel, which is trimmed to the shape of a toadstool, is now absolutely covered with hundreds or thousands of spikes of white bloom, that, when the air is heavy, scent all the flower garden. Towards the Shrubbery there are more of them, also ancient, but these grow like great bushes with many stems.

I went to the Flower-show at Norwich on the 2nd. It was held in a fine place, where once stood the Benedictine nunnery of SS. Mary and John, that of Carrow, which was founded by the ladies Leyna and Leftelina about the year 1146. Here were educated girls of noble birth, and long, long ago, doubtless those fair maidens, whose very names are lost, wandered through these beautiful grounds, dreaming of the great world and of the gay and happy life upon which they were about to enter. Well, they have put off life, gay or grave, and the world, happy or unhappy, presumably concerns them no more, though their blood still runs among us; in some of our own veins, perhaps, and their deeds, good or evil, still shape our destinies, as it was decreed that they should do.

Of their nunnery nothing now remains but some time-stained foundation walls, and, mayhap, it would be difficult for them to find their way about the altered garden, though slope and level must remain the same. But the trees are changed—where woods were around, now are houses; trim lawns and flower-beds have taken the place of primeval sward and bosky thicket, through which the nuns no longer flit. If their spirits may revisit these glimpses of the moon—and why should they not?—how they must wonder at the great tents filled, not with knights and armed men, but with rich flowers such as they never saw, though they might guess them kin of the roses that rambled in their pleasaunce. And the people of whose speech they would only understand a few words here and there, clad in strange-shaped garments, but, perchance, not changed so much in face and form, for are they not the fruit of the bodies of those among whom they lived?—yes, poor ghosts, they must wonder at them also, the descendants from whom they are separated by the sword of death and the gulf of time.

It is a great garden, that of Carrow Abbey, that must employ, I should say, a score of men, and beautifully arranged and kept. Still, I think it is larger than I should care for myself, for to my mind the real charm of a garden to those who love such places is that it should be big enough to enable the owner to grow many different things, but not so big that it is impossible for him to be acquainted with every tree, bush, and plant which he grows. If that size is exceeded the management of a garden becomes a business which must be left to underlings, and its personal delight is lost, or, at any rate, much lessened. So the thing strikes me, at least, and this view is to some extent borne out by the fact that the owners of such places, if they really love our gentle craft, and do not look upon them as a mere appanage of wealth, have a tendency to specialise in one or more of its branches, such as Orchid growing, or Carnation raising, or the forming of Orchards.

On the other hand, it is, of course, pleasant to possess furlongs of flower-beds and borders and shrubberies through which to walk, and even to contemplate tons of kitchen stuff, which one cannot possibly consume. Here each one must follow his tastes and opportunities; indeed, what to my mind makes gardening such a heavenly pursuit is that it can be adapted to the means and opportunities of all sorts and conditions of men. The labourer with his rod or two of ground and patch of flowers between his cottage door and the village road, or the city clerk with his cat-haunted, suburban plot, can, if they are of our gentle Company, win as much joy from these, with their petty failures and successes, as does Dives, with his ranges of stove-houses, his acres of fruit, shrubs, and flowers, his expensive and autocratic head-gardener, his foremen and his squads of underlings, some of whom he will not know by name and scarcely by sight.

The tents at the Show were uncommonly hot, nor did the Roses appreciate their atmosphere; for already, in the afternoon, many of them were drooping. I drooped also, or, at least, my shirt collar did; in short, the heat interfered with the enjoyment of the display. There were great quantities of cut Roses, those from the large growers who have an enormous stock to select from being the best, but their quality did not strike me as remarkable this year owing, perhaps, to the rigour of the season. Indeed, I was vain enough to reflect that I had some quite as good at home, though, possibly, had they been cut, carried to Norwich, and arranged in the regulation green boxes, they, too, might have presented an indifferent appearance. Indeed, to get the full effect out of Roses, I think that one should look at them in a mass, and growing; or, if cut, in bowlfuls, but so arranged that each flower stands apart from its fellows.

There were several new things also, including a tea called Bessie Brown, a large white rose, suffused with a pink blush, of which the outer petals curl back. It is handsome, but, perhaps, novelty is its greatest charm, for nowadays this is what we seek. For my part, I think that some of the Roses which have been in cultivation for years are equal to, if they do not surpass, any of these fresh varieties, many of which reign a day, are much written and talked about, and then displaced by new favourites. What Rose, for instance, can surpass the old Gloire de Dijon, which combines so much beauty with constitution and fecundity? Again I thought an exhibit of La France, of fine form and hue, more lovely than any of the new-discovered sorts.

There were other things in the Show, notably some fine collections of perennials, that shown by Major Petre, which took the first prize, being undoubtedly the best. It was of great variety and excellent culture, and among it I noted especially the blue Delphinium Belladonna, a very effective single sort; Heuchera Sanguinea, a most graceful and showy thing; Marina Longifolia, which was new to me, a thistly plant, with whorls of small pink flowers, and, between, buds like pearls appearing, altogether very quaint and pleasing; Ostrowskya Magnifica, with its bell-shaped and lily-like flowers of somewhat papery texture; and that glorified Meadow-sweet, Spiræa Aruncus, commonly called Goat's-beard.

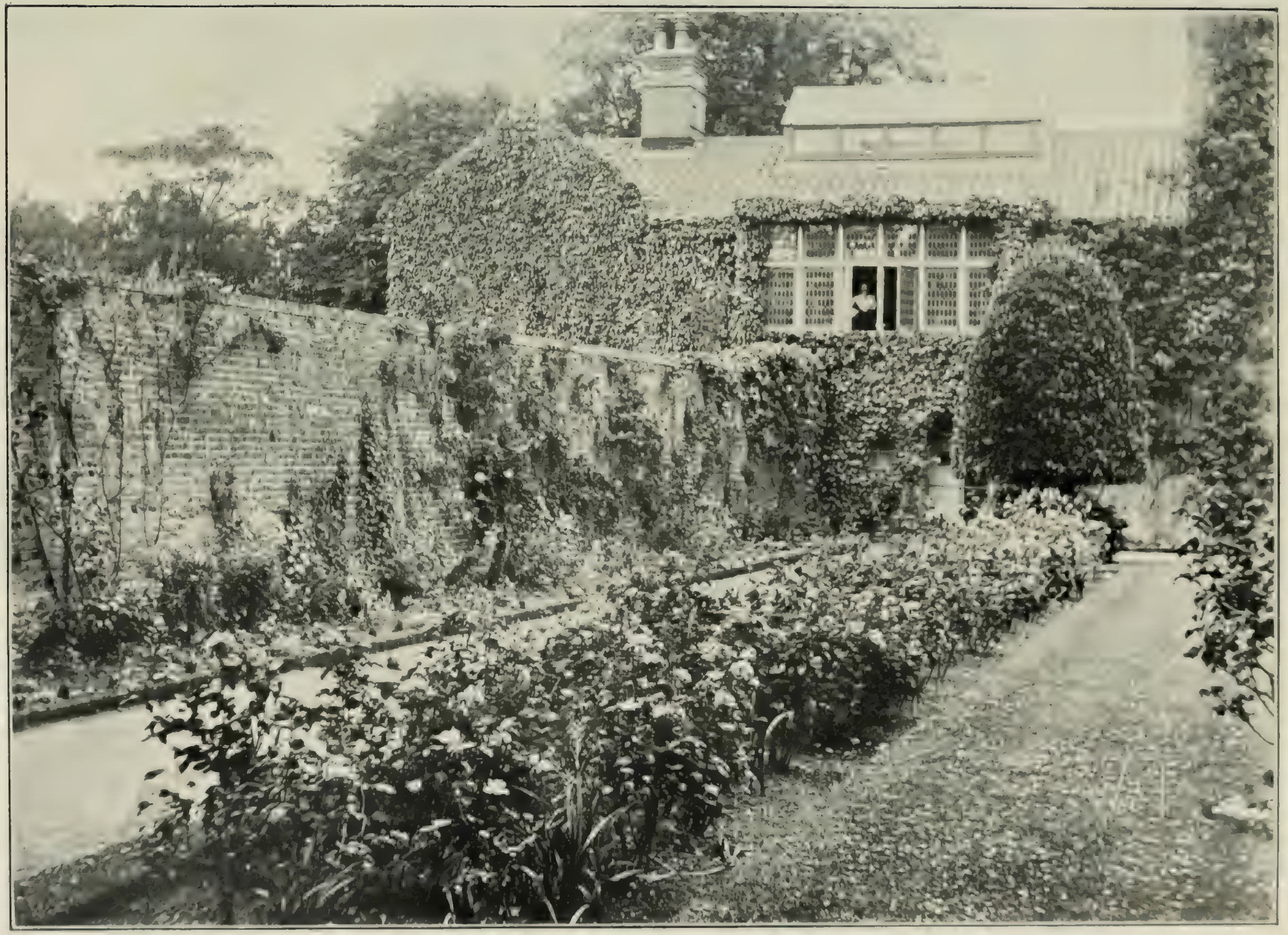
Also there was that beautiful object, Dictamnus Fraxinella, with its racemes of pale, purple bloom. I have a specimen of this, and also of the white variety, planted about three years ago, which have bloomed for the first time this year. Indeed, I find Dictamnus a very slow grower, perhaps because my soil is too heavy for the species. One of the prettiest exhibits in the show was a miniature garden made up upon the stage, and planted with blooming specimens of the hardy British Orchids, set among ferns and tiny rocks. They looked charming, especially the Bee orchis. This plant is very rare here, but once I found it growing by the banks of the Waveney, and removed it to the garden, where it promptly died. Evidently it is of wide distribution, for I have come across it, or something exactly like it, in Cyprus.

At home this night we had several sorts of Strawberries on the table. The varieties that I am growing now are Royal Sovereign, which, taken all round, is hard to beat on most soils, though on ours it is apt to run to wood; Sir J. Paxton; Laxton's Trafalgar, of which I can say little, as I have only a few reared from runners last year; the white Louis Gauthier: and St. Antoine de Padoue, of which this was our first dish. To tell the truth, it disappointed me a little, for, although of a fair flavour, the fruit is small, a characteristic of its tribe, and, as I thought, somewhat sharp. Whether its reputation for continual bearing is justified remains to be seen, but at present I do not discover many new flowers on my plants. It is however, right to add that these were runners set out last autumn, which have not yet attained their full size and bearing strength. I believe, also, that the best and most useful way to treat this Strawberry is to pinch out the first blooms and only allow the later ones to set. Grown in this fashion, it will come into bearing in August, and continue, in an ordinary season, to produce fruit till November, or so I am informed.

The most satisfactory and fruitful Strawberry in my garden this year is, doubtless, the white Louis Gauthier planted two years ago, which is carrying a gigantic crop of huge berries, of excellent flavour. I believe, however, that it rots easily in wet times, and is too soft to keep well, which, as they say on the Stock Exchange, are "bear" points against it; also, some people object to its white colour. Personally, I do not, that is, if it is given a dish to itself, although I admit that, if mixed with the scarlet sorts, its berries have an unripe appearance. I think, indeed, that the white varieties of fruit are often better than the coloured—witness the instances of white Currants, white Gooseberries, and white Raspberries. But this is a matter of opinion.

To-day we have been laying up manure for a new hot-bed, digging vacant land, and clipping the Myrobella plum fence round the Orchard. This fence, which I planted about ten years ago, is now as many feet in height, and has to be cut by the help of a pair of steps. Being set in a double line, it is a thick fence, but of the impenetrable thorns which it is supposed to produce I see but few, nor as yet are the individual stems particularly sturdy. It must be remembered also that this Plum is naked in winter, which means that it lets through the winds. On the whole, therefore, I wish that I had planted Beech, to which the brown leaves cling all that season, giving it a comfortable, russet appearance and great protective power. Holly would have been better still, but I remember that I rejected it because it is so slow in growing. Still, there is nothing so handsome or effective, and—time goes on; by now it would have been a good height, and adding to its stature year by year.

On the 3rd, a dull and windy day, fearing lest they should be snapped off, we found it advisable to stake our Phloxes and the bed of outdoor Chrysanthemums, the latter of which are planted over the Daffodils on the Old Vinery border. Also we began a periodical clean-up of the drives. I must say that the Roses, both on the Flower-garden and Stable borders, not to mention those trained upon the walls, now present a glorious spectacle of hundreds and hundreds of different coloured blooms. Never have I seen them bear so nobly, or so clean, or so large in size. The freedom from pests is, of course, due to our syringing, and the substance and brilliancy of the flowers (which, however, do not last very well this year when cut), as I believe, to a liberal use of farm manure, kainite, and basic slag. Of this latter chemical we gave them a good dose during the rain about three weeks ago, when we knew that it would be washed down to the roots, and certainly they have repaid us for the outlay.



ROSE BORDER, FLOWER GARDEN

In many gardens that I have visited the Rose bushes are small in size, and, therefore, can produce but few flowers, but most of mine I have had for a good many years with the result that they are now well-established specimens: nor do they seem to suffer from age, or rather, those of them which grow upon their own roots do not, though, undoubtedly standards deteriorate, and in time die away. At least, this is my experience, although it is odd that it should be so, seeing that they are grafted on hardy, hedgerow Briars. I think that the fault must lie in the grafted Rose; at any rate, as any gardener is aware, the stocks make the most persistent effort every season to throw up countless suckers, which shows that their roots are vigorous enough. Yet, in the end, the main stems die. Or is this because, in a state of nature, such old stems *do* die, leaving their place to be taken by younger scions thrown from the roots? It seems a feasible explanation, and, after all, from time to time we cut the old wood out of Roses that grow upon their own roots, leaving it to be replaced by the young, whereas the same stalk of Briar has from year to year to bear the burden of the alien life above it, all its efforts at self-reproduction being persistently defeated by knife and spade.

Rose-growing is fundamentally a matter of a suitable soil. Clay or stiff loam they must have; to try them in gravel or light, sandy lands is but vexation of spirit, and good time and money thrown away. With such clay soil we are favoured here, and, therefore, ought to be successful with this, the queen of hardy flowers.

The great curse of gardening is Names, that are as the sand of the seashore for number, and seem to add to their multitude year by year. To learn those of Orchids, for instance, is more difficult than I found it in my youth to master the dates of a thousand years of English history, though I think I have succeeded better with the Orchids than I did with the dates, perhaps because they interest me more. As I grow older I find that this difficulty increases, especially where flowers are concerned which have no old English title. The flowers I know, but the wild hunt through the recesses of my sub-conscious mind for their lengthy appellations frequently exhausts me more than writing a chapter of a romance.

Those of the Roses are a case in point, to know which nowadays implies an intimate acquaintance with the Christian and family cognomens of half the growers in France and Britain, to say nothing of those of many of our notorieties and aristocracy. I have been looking through mine, and find that most of the labels have rotted or become illegible with age. Indeed, the only satisfactory name-plates are those upon which the letters are raised in iron, and even these are apt to get upset or shifted to another bush.

Still, some remain, and some I remember. Here are a few of the most beautiful that I have in flower just now: John Hopper, a hybrid perpetual, very large and full, rose in colour, and, in my experience, hardy and a great bloomer. Clio, hybrid perpetual, blush or flesh colour, also a good bloomer and a strong grower. Gloire Lyonaise, hybrid, tea-scented, lemon-coloured, with pretty buds. Bouquet d'Or, a tea, which can be used as a climber, that is very like the Gloire de Dijon to which, I believe, it is allied, a capital rose. Madame Marie Verdier, hybrid perpetual, a beautiful full pink. Bardou Job (I wonder if this is the Old Testament character, or another), a hybrid, tea-scented, a lovely crimson, single. An exquisite white tea of which I cannot recall the name. Mrs. Harry Turner, a very satisfactory rose. Gloire de Dijon, to my mind the best and hardiest of all the teas. La France, a hybrid, tea-scented, a silvery pink, very large, free-blooming, and generally satisfactory. I have found that this should not be too closely pruned. Baroness Rothschild, hybrid perpetual, a light pink, very full, one of the first of roses. Captain Christy, hybrid, tea-scented, a most charming and delicate white, very large and fine.

Among these aristocrats, and dozens of others on the garden border, are one or two of the common little Pink Roses, which I grow here because they remind me of the hedges of them that rambled round my garden in Pretoria five-and-twenty years ago, and, indeed, all about that pretty Dutch town and many another city in South Africa. Also there is an ungrafted bush of Manetti, the common stock. How that came here I know not, but we must work something on to it when we find time.

My way to the Stable bed is along the old wall upon which other Roses hang, and past the Mushroom house, where years ago I planted a climbing Nephitos, now covered with its pure white blooms. It runs over the roof also, but this spring the cold winds and frost have caught it here and made its top unsightly. The Stable border is, if anything, even more beautiful than that of the Flower-garden, although it has never been re-made like the latter. Perhaps its effect is due to the planting of standards and half-standards at intervals among the bush Roses, thus breaking the line; also it owes something to the large clumps of Pinks, now a mass of flowers, that grow between them.

Among my best sorts here are Caroline Testout a hybrid, tea-scented, a very large, deep pink, single, and showing the eye, sweet scented also, like a wild Rose (by the way, these are lovely on the hedges now); Monsieur Victor Verdier, a rather small, bright crimson; Paul Neyron, hybrid perpetual, with huge crimson flowers. This rose I have found hardy and an excellent grower. Annie Laxton, hybrid perpetual, a bright red, that varies to crimson. This is a tremendous bearer, and we arch down sprays of it, which carry a wonderful show of blooms. Cheshunt Hybrid, a hybrid tea of a carmine hue, a glorious Rose, most fruitful of flowers, but I like it best as a climber. Madame Van Hout, a sweet, cream-coloured tea, and others "too numerous to mention."

On the wall at the end of this bed is one of the old-fashioned white Moss-roses which, when in bud, can hardly be surpassed for beauty. It is now a fine specimen, but I find it a slow grower. Also there is a copper-coloured Briar, that is lovely, but soon passes out of bloom.

I have instanced the foregoing sorts among my Roses because I think that anyone who has only room for a few of these delightful flowers cannot do better than plant them. One question—why are the Hybrid Perpetuals so named? The description "perpetual" surely applies better to the Teas, which bloom for a much longer period.

The 4th, which we spent trimming the grass edges and weeding the gravel, was a fine dry day, with a cold wind, that makes the watering cart a necessity, especially among the Ferns. I found one that had been overlooked for a day or two. It presents a miserable spectacle, and, to judge from its prostrate and curled-up fronds, might be at the very point of death. Give it a quart of water, however, and it will be quite vigorous again to-morrow morning. I wonder if Ferns actually suffer when they are deprived of their needed moisture as a thirsty man suffers in a desert place. I have gone through a modified experience of that sort twice in my life. Once I remember when lost in the African veld, I was driven by this torment of thirst to drink water from a "pan," or pool, full of dead vilder-beestes, and took no harm! Clearly, in those days I must have been typhoid proof. If they do so suffer, all I can say is that I sympathise with the Ferns. What must they feel when the water-cart goes by and they are overlooked, and how they must hate the waterer!

The Mont Blanc, which is one of the Xiphions, or English Iris, whereof I have several clumps in the bed by the Cold orchid house, is really a lovely thing, and doing very well this year. It would be difficult to find a purer white than that of its large and graceful flowers. In the Warm orchid house, Chysis Aurea has been in bloom and gone over. It is very pretty, with drooping racemes of yellow flowers, but their life seems short. Last year I thought that this was because a bumble-bee had got at and fertilised them, but as the same thing has happened this season, I suppose that it is characteristic of the plant. Chysis Bractescens, a variety from Mexico, which has white sepals and petals and a yellow lip, is a more satisfactory plant, and lasts much longer. Perhaps the Aureas would do better in the Cool house.

On Sunday, the 5th, I bicycled over to Kessingland, where, notwithstanding the drought, for very little rain has fallen there, I found the garden looking splendid. How the Lettuces flourish as they do in such a dry season, I cannot tell, but, perhaps, there is moisture in the salt air. The Strawberries here are small, but of an excellent flavour. I fear that the Poplar bushes will scarcely recover this season from their dreadful experiences in the spring. They are full of dead wood, which I have told Bayfield to cut out, as it is unsightly. The Tamarisks also have received a severe check. It looks to me as though the high winds have actually raised the beach by another three or four inches during the past fortnight; at least, the Marums appear to be more enveloped in sand.

On Monday, the 6th, the weather was that of November—dull, with a strong wind and threatening rain, which fell in the afternoon. We have now Sweet Peas in bowls upon the table, which, though late this year, are as welcome as ever. Truly, they are lovely flowers, and fragrant as they are lovely. Dozens of new sorts and colours are advertised every year, but I confess that I cannot see much difference in the flowers of 1903 and those of a decade gone, and I fancy that most of these fresh varieties are, in reality, no strangers to our gardens. I find that the great requisite of successful Pea culture is to sow them in really good soil, for choice, in some part of the Kitchen-garden that has been heavily manured; also the flowers must be cut continually and all seed pods removed, for if this is not done they will soon go out of bearing. Generally we grow a few in pots, which are hardened off and planted out, but I do not think that they bloom much earlier than the others. I have also tried sowing them in November with fair results. This year we have a few patches of the new sorts, in addition to our hedges, but they are not enough out to enable me to say much about them at present.

We have been barrowing manure from one of the Cucumber frames where the plants were exhausted, and replacing it with fresh to make up a hot-bed for the late Cucumbers, a somewhat arduous task, as a man must stand in the pit, and, forkful by forkful, lift out the stuff that has settled into a hard mass. The spent manure goes on to a piece of land that is to be dug for winter Greens. The Beech tree, of which one side was withered by the frost, is now putting out new leaves.

If the weather of the 6th was that of November, this of the 7th would be cold for December. We are engaged in sweeping up twigs, &c., broken from the trees by the icy gale, also in sowing additional Turnip seed and planting out more Celeriac. Cypripedium Rothschildianum is out in the Warm orchid house, the only one of my three plants that has flowered this year. I cannot describe it, but it is a rich and noble-looking bloom, with a dark, cinnamon-coloured lip, and a staminode not unlike a bird's beak. I bought this plant at a sale of Messrs. Bull some years ago, and remember that they thought it so fine a variety that its flower had been painted, which painting was handed round when it was put up. It is a grander thing than C. Stonei, good as that is, which is flowering opposite to it on the other bench. Brassavola Digbyana is also in bloom, and has been moved into the Cool house, that it may last longer. I possess several plants of this, but they are shy flowerers, although I am glad to see one of my imported pieces throwing up a sheath on the top shelf of the Intermediate house. I know no more attractive Orchid, with its large white or pale green flowers, and its wonderfully fringed margin, except those hybrids between it and the Cattleyas, of which I have already spoken.

I have a few plants of Pentstemon of the red variety in flower just now. Certainly they are very pretty, and remind me much of a rather refined Foxglove. The Sea-kale thongs that we set out early in the year beneath the Medlar trees are flourishing, and will make nice plants by the autumn. In the three rows I think that only two roots have missed. These Medlars, of which there are three, one bearing a much larger fruit than the other two, I procured from France about twenty years ago. They are grafted on White-thorn, about five feet from the ground, and are now making good-sized trees.

It is curious to note how the Thorn stocks try to reassert themselves. Quite early in the year I remember telling Charles to cut off the numerous shoots that were breaking from the stem, and to-day I have done this again myself, removing scores, both at the base of the trees and above, almost as high as the graft. It has been an annual occupation of mine for many seasons. If they were left alone for a while I imagine they would turn into small Thorn thickets, which, by robbing it of its sustenance, would ultimately cause the Medlar part above to perish. I find that few people like Medlars, but if they are properly "bletted," or ripened — rotted some might call it—personally, I think them agreeable. Also, if the bullfinches and tomtits are kept from picking out the flower-buds, they are heavy bearers. The great thing is not to gather the fruit until well on in October after a few light frosts have fallen, or to send them to table until the "bletting" process is complete. Freaks is taking advantage of the damp soil to dibble out Cos lettuces to-day, setting them about six inches apart.

On the 8th the weather mended somewhat, being sunny, with a cold wind. The clearing up of the smother of twigs and gale-torn leaves still goes on. It is lucky that the outdoor Chrysanthemums were already sticked. Those which are stood along the Kitchen-garden walks in pots seem to have suffered a good deal, and even in the protected Orchard I see that some of the young Cabbages have been snapped off at the stem. Also, we have been trimming the Tomato plants, from which I forgot to say we began to gather fruit a while ago, and digging another trench for Celery.

My Tropæolum Speciosum, or Flame flower, as this variety of Nasturtium is called, of which I have three plants, are flowering this year, their second here, but not so freely as I should like. As may be remembered, they are planted in the Elm-tree garden against the tall Yew fence, facing east, with a little south. This creeper dislikes sun (unlike T. Tuberosum, which I grow with success where it gets as much sun as possible), and likes moisture, for which reasons this seemed the best situation that I could find for it in the garden. Whether or no it will really prove suitable I cannot tell until the plants are stronger, but I hope that when they have sufficient vigour to enable them to climb to the top of the fence they will do well. If not, another place must be tried. T. Speciosum, however, seems to flourish better in Scotland than it does in England. My two varieties of Cacti, the red and the white, are now over in the Cool greenhouse, for I see the last of their lovely flowers withering. I think these belong to the Phyllocactus tribe, but I have had them for many years, and have long forgotten their names. Although I have never tried it myself, I have seen such Cacti grown most successfully by fixing the roots to balls of moss or peat fibre, and hanging them in the full sun in a greenhouse. In summer they are watered with a syringe, and in winter left quite dry.

Some of the perpetual blooming French Carnations (I think that they are called Marguerites) in the Cool greenhouse which I raised from seed have poor, single flowers, and must be thrown away. They are a useful kind, especially in winter, and often very pretty, although, of course, they have not the substance of the best Carnations, but a proportion of them always come thus, and are then inferior to the commonest Dianthus. The Begonias here are nice, but after those which I saw at the Temple Show I do not think much of them. They are all single varieties, that hitherto I have preferred to the double sorts.

In the Warm greenhouse the Gloxinias, of which, for lack of room, I do not now keep so many as formerly, are really handsome, especially a pure white sort, that I think I grew from seed. How curious are the unopened flowers, of which the petals look as though they had been sealed down with a wonderful skill and neatness, and how stately the upstanding blooms. I find Gloxinias easy to propagate by striking the leaves. These are placed in a pan with a little stone upon each of them. Here by degrees they rot away, but beneath the ribs of the leaves form tiny bulbs, which can be potted up and grown on. Here I have a couple of Hoyas climbing up the wires, pretty and curious things with their bunches of waxy flowers now fully out, and fleshy green foliage. These Hoyas I have known all my life, for when first I came to Ditchingham, I brought them from Bradenham, in this county, where I was born, and I think that they were given to my mother out of the Necton gardens not long after that interesting event. We only re-pot them once in five years, a treatment under which they seem to do very well, especially as I do not wish them to grow any larger. It is easy to overpot Hoyas.

From the roof hang four Japanese Davallia fern-balls, which I bought a couple of years ago. Although the place is somewhat sunny for them, they do fairly well, much better this year than last, and look pretty. They should be soaked occasionally in a bucket of water, as, even if they are not overlooked, syringing is hardly enough for them. I grow my Cattleyas Citrina in this house, as I observed in Mexico that they did best in the full blaze of the sun, and although most of the plants are somewhat old, I see that they are making good shoots and rooting well. The three big C. Insigne, which are too large for the Cool orchid house, being nearly a couple of feet across, are also flourishing and throwing up a multitude of new growths, My own impression is that these C. Insigne do not mind a good cooking in the sun, provided they are kept moist at the root during the growing season. Probably, indeed, they get this in their native haunts.

On the moss of a pot of a Phalænopsis orchid I see growing a tiny plant, with club-shaped, hairy leaves, and a drop of sticky dew or honey at the end of each hair, which is, I believe—although I may be wrong—one of the tiniest of the Sarraceniaceæ. But if it be small, it is strong enough in its own way; at least, it can kill! Those honey drops are a bait, and to them come insects, that are speedily entangled in the long hairs. Whether or no the leaves close on them I am not sure.

Since writing the above I have been to fetch the plant, and have just examined it under a magnifying glass. I see that the leaves do not appear to close; what close are the hairy tentacles which carry the bait and form the trap. As soon as the insect, generally a gnat or midge, is entangled, these tentacles fold over it inwards, press it to death, or, at least, retain it until it dies, and then, I suppose, extract its juice for the benefit of the plant. When this process is finished, and nothing remains except its husk, I perceive that the tentacles open again, and appear to me to thrust the valueless remains to and over the edge of the leaf.

Such is this strange plant, that I hope I am right in calling one of the Sarraceniaceæ, which kills as surely as a butcher, aud *is*, indeed, a vegetable butcher. To my mind, its unpleasant habits show in a very striking manner how real, if subtle, is the connection between the animal and the vegetable world, for here we have a plant actually feeding on the living creatures that it has caught, and, what is more, baiting its traps in order to catch them. Is there, then, so wide a gulf between it and *homo sapiens*, who does precisely the same thing and lives thereby? We think nothing of putting this law of death—Nature's hideous scheme—in motion for our own profit, but when a wretched little plant imitates our exalted example, the effect is uncanny. The South American legends of trees that stretch down their boughs, envelop men or animals sleeping in their shade, crush them to death, and feed upon their flesh, must have an origin in the habits of such interesting plants. Indeed, since these exist, there is no reason why man-devouring trees should not exist also. It is only a question of size—more wondrous or horrible they could not be!

Last year, together with some bulbs and other Orchids, a friend sent me an Angræcum Sesquipedale from Mauritius, planted in a pot or receptacle formed from the hollowed-out trunk of some fibrous Palm. It arrived in very bad condition, and although I re-potted it in moss and did my best for it, this morning I have removed it from the Warm house—dead. I have been told that the reason of the somewhat high cost of these Angræcums—they fetch about thirty shillings each as growing plants, although in Madagascar, their habitat, they are very plentiful—is the difficulty of establishing them, and this instance seems to prove the truth of that report.

I read in the *Gardening World* that at the recent show of the Royal Horticultural Society, Mr. A. Peeters, of Brussels, exhibited a fine specimen of Cattleya Warneri Alba (one of the Labiata section), which plant is said to have been sold for £1000. A curious world, truly, in which some men are able to give £1000 for a white flower, whilst millions of others live on, or stumble across, the verge of starvation. However, it is good for trade and causes money to circulate. Also the difference of giving £1000 and a single sovereign for such an object is only one of degree, so nobody need be shocked.

We have quite a nice show of fruit on the table now—Peaches, of the kind called Alexander, which has improved enormously in size and flavour since the tree was lifted and root-pruned in the fashion that I have described; two sorts of Strawberries, Figs, and a dish of Logan-berries, which, although they are very fine and look black, seem scarcely ripe enough to be first-class eating. This excellent fruit should not be put upon the table until it is dead ripe, when I know few that are more delicious, with its mingled flavour of Blackberry and Raspberry. The same remark applies to Figs, that gardeners are so apt to send in too green. No Fig should be touched until its skin cracks in several places; before that it has a taste of sawdust, and is a good fruit wasted.

On Thursday, the 9th, we were again pond-cleaning, fence-clipping, and grass-cutting, occupations that take up a good deal of our time just now. Also we put the soil on the new hot-bed preparatory to planting the late Cucumbers. In the Cold orchid house my single specimen of Oncidium Incurvum has come into bloom, which its long spikes have been preparing to do almost since the beginning of the year.

Truly, the Orchid-grower's favourite text should be: "In your patience possess ye your souls," which, personally, I consider one of the greatest and most salutary rules of life that were ever laid down for the benefit of men. I think that I must have had this plant for about eight years, during all of which time it has occupied house-room and had its needs attended to without rewarding me with a single bloom. Now at length it has elected to flower, and I must say the result is worth the waiting. Unless they are looked into closely the individual flowers, which are violet coloured, tipped with white, are small and not striking, but each long arching spike bears twenty-eight of them, and of these spikes the plant has thrown up four. The general effect of the basket, full of green bulbs and leaves, with a long tress of flowers bending over each corner of it, is extraordinarily light and graceful.

I have been looking at the Cattleyas Mossiæ with Mason, and we have decided that a batch of the large plants must be re-basketed, which has not been done since they came from Venezuela about four years ago. Last year, however, we top-dressed them with Belgian leaf-mould, in which I find that the roots have worked very well. I shall, therefore, use a good proportion of it in our re-potting compost, but mixed with some of our English Oak-leaf-mould. Indeed, I am of opinion that this leaf-mould is of more benefit to plants in baskets than in pots, where, unless great care is exercised, it is apt to become sodden and rot the roots. In the baskets, however, it is difficult to prevent it from washing out between the bars.

We have been pegging down the Logan-berries in order to increase our stock, and I have told Mason to cut the bark where it is buried in the earth, as I think they root more quickly if this be done. Also we are netting them, which has become a very needful task, for the birds find this fruit delicious. With the Logans, it may we remembered, grow some Wine and Honey-berries, both from Japan, and a root or two of garden Blackberries. The Honey-berries that did well last year have now, to all appearance, gone wrong at the roots, for their foliage is withering, and the Blackberries do not really thrive, although the Wine-berries are so far healthy.

About this time in July I always like to walk round the home pastures and cut out any Dog thistles—that is the local name for them—which I can find, a job that, amid the pressure of other work, is too frequently omitted by bailiffs. But a misfortune has befallen me—my spud has vanished. It was a very old and very dear friend, and although the intrinsic value of its oak and iron would not touch sixpence, sooner would I have lost a five-pound note. It is really curious how attached one can become to a stick which has grown elderly with us, and been the silent, if serviceable, companion of so many moods and seasons. But one unlucky day I left it hanging on the railings, as I have done thousands of times before, and it vanished.[1]

This being so, I could not cut my Thistles until I had provided myself with another spud, which I hesitated to do, as I have reached a conservative time of life, when I do not care about buying new sticks. At this juncture I remembered that I still possessed a yet older friend, which I bought about five-and-twenty years ago for sixpence in a shop in Bungay, a stout

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[1] Months later my spud was found again, in a very dilapidated condition from exposure to the wet. Someone must have thrown it into a bush in the Dog-kennel patch, where it was found when cleaning up. It has been re-varnished, &c., and is now almost as good as ever.—H. R. H. (1904).

Oak sapling, with a curved handle. In Africa, where it is difficult to get ferules, and elsewhere, this stick became so worn by constant use that a few years after my return to England I was obliged to put it away in a cupboard, as I did not wish to burn or throw away so old a friend simply because it was past service. Now I got it out again, and found, to my joy, that it was still capable of being converted into an excellent spud.

There followed several interviews with the blacksmith, for the making of a spud is not to be lightly undertaken. Of course, such things are sold in shops, but I have never found one there that was of the slightest use, for these all break or come off the shaft. No, your spud must be made of the best wrought iron, scientifically tempered to steel at the cutting part. More important still is the method of fixing it to the stick, on to which the socket should be shrunk with a projecting tongue, at least six inches in length. Then two holes, corresponding with those in the tongue, must be burned through the wood (remember, burned, not bored, for this is apt to split the stick), and stout rivets passed from side to side, the same being flattened at the heads while the iron is still hot, after which spud and stick will be one until death do them part. There remains the important question of balance, and that this may be perfect, it is well to have the actual spud below the neck of iron made an inch or so longer than will be required, so that it can be re-heated and cut down, until experience shows, which it will do within a week or so, that it is of the exact length and weight. Then re-heat, file to sharpness while red, and temper by gradually dipping the iron in the blacksmith's tank, when you will see the blue tinge of steel appear upon it; polish up with a finer file, and your spud will last the lifetime of a man.

There is, by the way, another sort of spud, excellent for Thistle cutting, but not good to walk with, especially at a garden-party, for it catches in ladies' dresses. It is affixed in the same way, but fashioned to a sharp hook of steel, that will cut off any Thistle, however tough, with a single inward draw. I keep one of these at my farm at Bedingham, where there are many thistles and no ladies.

Thus re-armed, having first—I forgot to say—caused the blacksmith to brand my initials on the end of the crook, I went on my way rejoicing, as, if it could feel, the stick would have rejoiced also, I am sure, after a seclusion of eighteen years in a dark cupboard, and cut out Thistles until I was exceedingly hot. At the end of this exercise I remembered—and here is the point of the story—that on a certain spot in a certain field grew a certain Thistle. Ever since this field was laid down to grass, now ten years ago, summer by summer, with but few exceptions I have cut out that Thistle; that is whenever the pasture was fed, for when it is under hay the machine deals with the Thistles. I walked to it, it was about a quarter of a mile away, and there sure enough it was flourishing in all its pristine health and vigour.

Well, it did not flourish long, but I should like to understand to what it is that the Thistle owes its extraordinary vitality. Is there any other plant, I wonder, that could endure, season by season, while in the full flow of sap, to be hacked off at its base, to have its bleeding stump pounded with iron and a heel until it is a mass of broken fibre, and yet appear quite fresh and handsome next summer? Yet hitherto that Thistle has done so, and, if I live to see them, I have little doubt that in Julys to come we shall repeat our annual interview. How that particular specimen of the genus Carduus must detest the sight of me.[1]

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[1] I seem to have conquered that Thistle at last; at least it is not to be found in August, 1904.—H. R. H.

Talking of Thistles, I have two plants of a variegated variety, with a handsome yellow bloom, growing in the garden. These were brought to me from Trieste by a relative, where, she says, they are common. They seem to do well in England, and are worth cultivating for their beauty.[1]

On the 10th, a perfect, windless summer day, we cleared land of worn-out Spinach and early Peas, and did more netting, of Raspberries this time, which necessitate a higher and rather elaborate framework. The handsome Portugal Laurels are now going over, and I am sorry to lose them, but, by way of compensation, the sweet-scented Limes, among which the bees hum in thousands are coming into bloom. Thalictrum Flavum is out in the Elm-tree bed, and looks pretty with its graceful, fern-like foliage and its tall bunches of yellow flower. Indeed, on such a day as this all the garden seems bright and joyous, especially the beds ablaze with Roses. The hanging tresses of Odontoglossum Citrosum in the Intermediate house are nice, but nothing like so good as I have seen them, owing, I imagine, to last year's lack of sunshine, which told upon the constitutions of many Orchids. It is a great pity that my Vandas should have suffered so much from the undiscoverable burning-glass in the roof of this house, as the shape of three of them is almost spoiled thereby. I notice that the leaves which were most injured by the burning turn black and drop off.

Of my three large specimens of Sobralia, which live together in what I call "Sobralia Corner," two are now over, a purple S. Macrantha, and a whitish yellow, which I think is called S. Sanderæ, but the remaining S. Macrantha, which stands behind the other is just coming on. The S. Sanderæ I was very fortunate to obtain. I am told that it was originally sold as a small plant for ten guineas to a gentleman, at the sale of whose collection it was bought for me by Mr. Tracy, to whom it was knocked down, I think, at thirty shillings. Scarcely had it gone when the original vendor appeared in the tent, from which he had been accidentally absent, and offered to give Mr. Tracy twenty pounds for the plant. It is now a large specimen, but not so robust as S. Macrantha. This year, however, it has borne many beautiful flowers.

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[1] Since the above was written I have seen quantities of these thistles in the South of Spain.—H. R. H. (1904).

While sitting at my desk, with the windows open, I have observed two little Solitary wasps (I believe that Eumenes Coarctata is their scientific name) buzzing about the keyholes, from which they absolutely refuse to be driven away. They are determined to lay their eggs in those keyholes, and can no more be turned from that purpose than can a broody hen from frequenting the nest where she has made up her mind to sit. To-day they are back again, and now I perceive them carrying green caterpillars, of about the same length as themselves, which they hold straight underneath their bodies. These caterpillars appear to be stiff and quite motionless, and the wasps worry at their throats with their mandibles. Their feet seem to be glued to the feet of the caterpillars, that cling to them as a piece of wire clings to a magnet. Well, into the key-holes they went, and when they came out there were no caterpillars.

I understand that the explanation of this fiendish proceeding is that the wasp, having caught its caterpillar, paralyses it in some mysterious way, an operation that was probably in progress when I saw them gnawing at their victim's throat, and one which accounts for its stiff appearance. The caterpillars are then deposited in the nest in the keyhole, where an egg has been already laid. This egg in time becomes a grub, which grub eats the preserved, but still living, caterpillar, that in some fashion, too marvellous to fathom, has been kept in good condition without food and drink until the grub is ready to consume it, I suppose next spring. It will be seen therefore that this wasp has succeeded in improving upon the most scientific practices of modern men. We kill sheep and preserve them in cold chambers, but in order to attain to the high level of ingenuity of Eumenes Coarctata we must learn how to keep our sheep motionless and living without any expense in the shape of provender or waste of tissue, until they are required by the butcher. I wonder whether those caterpillars retain their sentient powers in the wasp's uncomfortable nest. If so, what a nightmare must be theirs! And what an awakening!

It will be noted also that these provident habits imply prescience on the part of the wasp, and this for another, not for itself, since it will never see its child, the grub, nor partake of the caterpillar. How does this circumstance fit in with our widely-accepted theories of evolution by hereditary experience? Did some wise wasp first evolve the idea of cold storage of living caterpillars, and furnish itself with an antiseptic preservative such as no human being has as yet discovered, by means of which its brilliant inspiration was translated into fact? And, by the way, would it not be possible to analyse the fluid injected into the caterpillars, to manufacture the same, and make use of it for the service of man? Only it may be—I am quite ignorant on the point myself—that no fluid is injected. The wasp may hypnotise the caterpillar. However this is, even if the practice did originate with a sapient and primeval wasp, as the laying up of caterpillars is necessary to the continuation of the species, how was that species continued *before* the habit was evolved?

No, it would seem that from the day these wasps existed on the face of the earth their storage system must have existed also; that the first wasp which came into being must have paralysed caterpillars and lardered them in keyholes; or, rather, in convenient places in trees or rocks; otherwise the race would have expired. What then taught the first wasp to do these things? Not hereditary experience, but, though it may seem sadly behind the times to say so, as I am inclined to think, the Maker of all creatures that walk, fly and run, or swim and crawl. Yet creation by evolution seems a nobler scheme than creation by sudden command or whim, and it is possible that once there existed lost links in the life history of these insects which, did we but know them, would account for their wise habits.

On the 11th, a lovely day that turned strangely cold in the afternoon, we were liquid-manuring again, and digging ground for winter Broccoli. Also we were watering before the sun was well up and when it began to decline in the heavens.

The 12th was Sunday, and on Sundays the garden is very quiet. A pair of jays took advantage of this to come to eat the green Peas, which in all my experience here I have never seen them do before. I discovered them in the act and frightened them away. Imagine my astonishment then, when in the afternoon I saw a jay in the Peach house, of which the door was locked, whither I had gone to see, through the glass, how the tortoise Capernaum was faring, and whether he had enough lettuce to satisfy an appetite which, at this time of year, I must call voracious. Clearly the jays had returned, and occupied themselves in stealing the dwarf Peas which are planted on the Peach house border, till, drawn by the curiosity that marks its kind, one of them hopped through a ventilator to find what lay beyond. The results did not please it, so, its means of entry forgotten, it could not escape again, but flew up and down the length of the house, sheltering itself from my gaze as much as possible behind the Peach boughs, and loudly lamenting its unhappy fate. Of this its husband or wife was quite aware, for, hidden in the recesses of the great Elms close at hand, it gave utterance to a series of pathetic shrieks such as I have never before heard proceed from the throat of a jay.

As I had no key, and could not, therefore, enter the Peach house, I sent a message to Mason to catch the bird when he came up, and put it into a cage. This he did, and appeared with it next morning. It was in a dreadful plight, and very evidently repented of the sin of gluttony.

Well, I did not wring its neck, as I was recommended to do, for repentance passes, and once a pea-eater a jay is said to be always a pea-eater, but let it go. It departed in a great hurry, and it was curious to see how as it fled, sparrows and other little birds emerged from the trees and bushes and mobbed it. Up to the present that jay has returned no more.

The 13th was dull and coldish. Freaks is engaged in clipping the Box edgings by the help of a line stretched along them. This is a job that is very apt to get neglected in a garden, with the result that the edgings grow into little fences, which, although they look ornamental, often die away in places, and are also a great harbour for snails and slugs. But it is a somewhat fidgety task, and where there are a good many walks, one that takes time. Mason has been re-potting our Gloire de Lorraine Begonias in a compost that includes a good deal of leaf-mould. Most of them were in orchid pans, which are pierced for hanging wires, but this time we are putting them into pots, as we find that the holes in the pans let in too much air to the roots which dries the plants. I have had these specimens nearly two years and they are now growing to a good size. I imagine that the large plants that I have seen in various gardens must sometimes be over-year specimens; that Gloire de Lorraines are, in short, perennials, which increase with age. Certainly my plants do not seem to make much growth in a single year, but that may be because I have not as much heat as they like. Many gardeners, I believe, however, never keep these Begonias for a second season, their practice being, I understand, to cut down the plants, and about March to strike others from the new shoots, which in heat make a fine show by the following winter.

We have settled that a good many of the Cymbidiums must really be re-potted as soon as ever we can find time. The labels show that few of the C. Loweiis have been attended to since 1900, and one or two of them not since 1897, with the result that their growths are becoming weak.

What a pretty plant is the Peruvian Lily, Alströmeria Aurantiaca, with its orange red-streaked blooms. A friend gave me a couple of roots of this two years ago, and now they have increased and come into flower. I doubt, however, whether our soil is really light enough for them to flourish and multiply as they ought. I believe they do best in leaf-mould, with rubble drainage underneath them. In large clumps these Lilies are singularly effective. Potentilla or Cinquefoil, variety Atro-Sanguinea, with its blooms of crimson velvet is also very handsome. Its general appearance and the shape of the flowers are not unlike those of a bushy Strawberry. This, too, is supposed to like light soil, but does well enough in ours.

Near to it on the Stable border are some roots of Physalis Peruviana, or Winter Cherry, which are now beginning to bloom. Most people will know their bladder-like capsules and the bright red fruit within. In South Africa one of this tribe grows wild, and is called the Cape-gooseberry. Many is the time that I have refreshed myself with its slightly acid fruit, which is yellow in colour, and makes an excellent jam. Remembering this, a year or two ago, I tried to eat some of the red garden sort, and regretted the experiment. Its taste is abominable. Indeed, for aught I know, it may be poisonous.

How beautiful are the Liliums Candidum, also called St. Joseph's or Annunciation Lilies, that are now blooming freely all down the Stable border. I know nothing lovelier than this common flower, which is generally seen at its best in cottage gardens, where it has been left undisturbed for years, or even for generations. Some people say that it should never be replanted at all, but this has not been quite my experience, as I found that our original clump worked its bulbs almost clear of the soil and ceased flowering. After this I broke it up and replanted it, since which time it has done better. Also the bulbs that I took off are making clumps of their own. Still, as a general rule, it is best left untouched for a period of years. Some of my neighbours have found that this Lily is much afflicted with a disease, which causes the flower-stems to fall over and die. I think that this comes from the action of a grub which attacks the bulb, but I am glad to say that up to the present it has not troubled me. The village people still pick the white petals of these flowers and preserve them in brandy to be used as a salve for cuts and bruises, a remedy in which they have, or used to have, great faith. Perhaps this accounts for its being so widely cultivated by cottagers, but the circumstance is curious, as the root is said to yield an active poison.

Other beautiful, though common plants now beginning to bloom are Œnothera Biennis, or Evening Primrose, with its quantities of large yellow flowers, and St. John's Wort (Hypericum), with its green foliage and brilliant golden bloom. I wish that I had more of this, but, fortunately, it is easily increased, and will grow in any decent soil, even under the shade of trees.

Although they were done two years ago, I see that the white paint is again flaking off the greenhouses, which means that they must be attended to next spring. I have made up my mind to use red oxide paint in future—I think that is the name of it—as, although its violent hue is not very pretty, it lasts much longer, and these periodical paintings come expensive.

A friend of mine has put up a number of greenhouses in teak, which does not require painting, but that splendid wood is a luxury for the rich man.

We are now having dishes of Broad Beans and although they are still small, that does not make them the worse eating. This is an unfashionable vegetable, but to my mind one of the best that grows. Gardeners, however, are apt to sow them in too large breadths, with the result that they become big and hard before they can be consumed, and that afterwards there are none. For household consumption a few only should be planted at a time, so as to prolong their season.

This day, the 14th, has been fine, with a cool wind, and we took advantage of it to mow the lawns.

On the 15th, which was warmer, we were cleaning up for a garden-party, and on the 16th mowing down the rubbish in the Shrubbery. Also, as there was a little rain, we planted out Broccoli and Lettuce, and on the 17th sowed Lettuce, Onions, Parsley, and Chervil.

An enormous heap of clippings, sticks, Potato-tops, pond weeds, and all the miscellaneous garbage collected from house and garden, having accumulated, and the wind being right, that is, away from the house, we have set the bonfire going again. The columns of white smoke are magnificent, and I love to watch them rolling up among the trees, while below there is a splendid blaze. In a few hours, however, this dies away, and then the heap, to which daily additions are artistically made, which also it is my special care to mend and stoke—there is no more fascinating occupation—smoulders away for a week or two, till all that evil-odoured waste is turned into clean, whity-brown ashes, and in this shape goes back to fertilise the land that bore it.

I have been picking some of the last flowers off the Dictamnus plants, and find, what I never noticed before, that they are most sweet-scented, their odour being almost exactly the same as that of the Verbena. The Carnations are beginning to bloom on the Old Vinery border. Many of them we reared from seed the year before last, but of these I regret to see that a large proportion are coming single, and will have to be thrown away as worthless. After keeping plants for two years this is rather disappointing, and seems to suggest that it would be wisest to propagate Carnations, Picotees &c., from cuttings only. There are a number of this year's seedlings, also planted on the border. I only trust that, when the time comes for them to bloom, they may not serve us in the same fashion, but that will not be known for another year.

The Shirley Poppies are pretty now with their various colours. It is a pity that these will not last in water, but, although I have never tried it, I am told that if the stalks are sealed up by burning them with fire, they remain fresh quite a long time. *Fiat experimentum*, after which I can report. The lavender-hued blooms of the variegated Funkias look neat, though, of course, this is pre-eminently a foliage plant, and a very good one. The first Raspberries are now ripe, but their size leaves much to be desired. However, we should not grumble, for many people in these parts have none at all this year, the late frosts having killed them all. With Gooseberries the case is much the same, but the position of our bushes being sheltered by the Yew fence and Elms, I am glad to say that we have a very fair supply.

In the Intermediate house, which is now very bare of flowers, the first Lælia Præstans, or Pumila, is out, and its rosy flower, with the rich purple lip, is, needless to say, as welcome as ever. I find these plants very liable to a white scale, which, if it is not detected, turns the leaves yellow; nor do I consider them really strong growers. They flower profusely, however, which, I imagine, is one cause of their weakness. In order to guard against this

I cut a large number of the blooms last year, whether with any good result or not we shall shortly know. Another thing that is flowering here is Odontoglossum Schlieperianum, a really lovely thing, to my mind almost as beautiful as the vaunted, blotched specimens of Odont. Crispum, for which rich fanciers give £1000 (by the way, I hear now that over £2000 has recently been paid for one of these plants—it is incredible!). O. Schlieperianum bears a stout raceme of splendid flowers, sulphur in hue, and banded with purple, the lip being a light yellow. I have only two plants of it, but I wish that I had a score.

On Saturday, the 18th, we had some real rain at last; in fact, it was very heavy for two or three hours, enough so to knock down the barleys a good deal, though this will be compensated for by the good that it must do to the roots, pastures, and garden. I stood out in it, engaged in my usual occupation of clearing the water-pipes of *débris* washed from the roofs, which causes them to overflow and wastes the precious water. This is a very wet job, involving, as it does, thrusting one's arm down brimming cistern-heads, and, handful by handful, scraping out the dirt from round the wire rosettes, against which it has accumulated.

On lifting the lid of the gravel and charcoal filter to see what volume of water was passing through it to the great underground tank that I dug years ago, I found two newts established there, as I remember happened once before. Now, how on earth did those newts get into that filter, which is covered over and stands in the dry kitchen-yard? I can only suppose that they were washed down from the roof, for unless they were put there they can have arrived in no other conceivable way. But how do newts get on to roofs? As I remember Dr. Kenealy did in the Tichborne trial, I pause, and am likely to pause, for a reply. Carrying these newts, I met Knowles, a particularly stalwart specimen of humanity, and asked him to be so good as to convey them to the nearest pond. He looked coy, shuffled his feet, and put out his hand with a blush.

"What!" I said, "are you afraid of them?" and he admitted the soft impeachment, saying something about "bite."

Imagine a man brought up in the country being afraid to touch a harmless little newt! However, if he fears newts, Knowles does not fear water, for in the middle of this tremendous downpour I found him calmly planting out Savoys in the Orchard.

On this day also we sowed some Carrots and Parsley, rearranged the greenhouse, and washed a multitude of pots.

On Sunday, the 19th, the weather fined up a little. I see that all this deluge has not put out the bonfire. When once alight, it is extraordinary how much wet these heaps will absorb, and still burn on.

On the 21st we re-potted our seedling Begonias, and, amongst other things, budded the Manetti stock, of which I have spoken, with a large and beautiful red Rose, whereof, unfortunately, we have lost the name. To do this we cut away all the bush except two young shoots, near the base of which we inserted the buds, leaving the shoots growing above them, to be cut down later on should the operation prove successful. I fear, however, that we have left it rather too long.[1] To-day, for the first time this year, the dinner-table was decorated with Carnations.

On the 22nd, heavy rain having again fallen during the night, we rolled the grass and drives, tying the old pony, Buttercup, to the large roller, in order to get over the job quickly. Also we began re-potting the Cymbidiums, which hitherto we have had no time to deal with. It was not too soon, for we found these big plants starving and many of the roots perished, though not rotten. I think that when the leaves fall from the pseudo-bulbs, the corresponding roots die naturally, leaving the plant to be supported by those pushed from the new growths. In order to make a thorough job of the business, we are breaking up the specimens completely, removing all spent bulbs and roots, and setting the remaining portions in a mixture of Belgian and English leaf-mould, peat, sphagnum moss, and broken oyster shells. Also, by way of experiment, we are mixing lumps of burnt earth among the crocks, as I think these will serve both for drainage purposes and for that of nutriment to the roots.

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[1] One of the buds has taken well.—H. R. H. (December, 1903).

In one of the pots we captured a cockroach, hidden snugly away beneath the plant. Of these pestilent vermin it seems impossible to be rid, as they conceal themselves in all sorts of unsuspected crannies, and only feed at night. Moreover, if by chance one comes upon them, they run with such surpassing swiftness that it is rarely possible to do them to death among the pots, and for beetle-poisons they show a fine contempt. Still, thanks to frequent lime-washings, there are fewer of them in the houses than there used to be.

On the 23rd, which was dull and warm, we went on with the Cymbidiums, and when they were done and replaced, looking very neat and nice in the houses, dealt with several of the Cœlogynes Dayana in the same way. This is named the Necklace orchid, and although I do not call it a free bloomer, few things are more charming than its pendant sprays of brown or ochre-hued flowers. I discovered one of them this morning that was poked away at the back of the stage, and had come out there unobserved, its long inflorescence lying in a little heap upon the coke. We have hung it up, but I fear that its beauty is almost past. Also we re-potted some Cyclamen and went on with the clipping of the Box edges. One of the new Nymphæas has opened a bloom, but, to my disappointment, I find that although superior in form and colour, it is very like a sort I already possess. I think that it is the rose-coloured N. Luciana. The other three plants will not flower this year.

Friday, the 24th, was again very wet, so we spent the day in cleaning and arranging the greenhouse, pruning down the Geraniums, weeding out some of them, and putting in cuttings of others.

The 25th proved fine, and we planted out more Brussels Sprouts and Broccoli, which should take well in this wet, kept the roller going on the soaked gravel, and sticked and tied our Dahlias and Chrysanthemums. The Ferns which we pulled out of the Cymbidium pots we have planted in the fernery. Most of them seem to be hardy sorts, sprung, no doubt, from the peat, and, notwithstanding the change of temperature and habit of life, I think that a proportion of them will survive.

Hitherto I have found it almost impossible to make use of Water-lilies as an ornament in the house. Now I have tried them in a new way, namely, in a large brown pickling dish, on which we lay the leaves so that they float, for otherwise these die, placing the blooms among them. The effect is charming while it lasts, but, unfortunately, if the day is dull the flowers shut up as they do in the pond, and then are apt not to open again. I noted a curious circumstance, of which I should like an explanation. The stalks of all the leaves, including those of Villarsia, turn themselves straight up, so that they stand several inches above the surface of the water. Why do they do this, I wonder? The habit is peculiar to the leaves, for the stalks of the blooms show no such inclination.

On Sunday, the 26th, it went on raining heavily nearly all day, and on the 27th from midday to midnight. Yet, and it shows how dry our soil must be, it was only on the 28th that any quantity of water came into the garden pond, which even now is by no means full, although the new drain has been working well. Certainly, in this district our rainfall has been exceptionally small of late years; consequently, as yet, there is but little water out on the marshes. In other parts of Suffolk and Essex which I passed through on my way to London, on the 27th, the case is very different, for there I saw floods in every direction, and much of the corn has been beaten quite flat. These heavy and unseasonable rains will, I fear, spoil the sample in many counties—another blow to the farmers, especially in the fen districts. Also I saw a good deal of hay still out and rotting in the fields.

I have a few plants of Sweet Bergamot (Mentha Odorata) in bloom. How handsome are its crown-shaped scarlet heads and how powerful is its mint-like odour. I took a few of these flowers, amongst others, to a child who had undergone an operation in a nursing home, and when I removed them from the box they smelt so strong that it was thought best not to leave them in the room. It is a pity that this fine old plant is now so seldom met with in gardens. The Phloxes are beginning to bloom. They are splendid for borders, with their tall, graceful stems and heads of many-coloured flowers. The Candytufts (Iberis) are also in full beauty. We use them on margins, to which their compact growth and free-flowering habit make them well suited.

I see one pot of Disa Grandiflora (the Flower of the Gods) growing in the Cold orchid house. It is the only one left, and the last that I shall ever have, for this Orchid, like Vanda Cœrulea, has completely beaten me. I have tried it in every way—with bulbs bought in England and with bulbs sent me from the Cape—and have even flowered it once or twice, but my failure is flagrant. I have stood it over tanks of water, I have grown it in greenhouses, I have rested it in the sun and in the shade, I have given it warmth and given it cold, and yet it always dies. Some people, I am told, are very successful with Disas, but, clearly, I am not one of them, which, as they are among the most beautiful flowers that grow, is a pity. In the Cape, and especially on Table Mountain, D. Grandiflora flourishes luxuriantly by the sides of streams, where spray falls continually upon it during the wet season, but these conditions I have found it impossible to reproduce. Therefore, it is aggravating to be told that other people can grow it like a weed in any greenhouse.

The crop being finished, we have dug up our large Strawberry bed, which has stood three years, and carted away the plants to be burnt. Now we are digging trenches for Celery where they stood. Also we are potting up a large number of runners from the other Strawberries, which, those of them that are not to go to Kessingland, will in due course be planted where our main crop of autumn Onions stand. Some of these runners have, I see, rooted in three places, making as many separate plants. Gardeners have a superstition that those plants which grow beyond the first, they call them second runners, will not bear, but this I believe to be the purest nonsense, for what difference can there be between these and the plant that springs nearest to its mother? At any rate, we are using them indiscriminately.

We have begun our usual midsummer pruning of the espalier Apple and Pear trees, cutting away the hundreds of shoots which they form in their effort to return to a natural habit of growth. This pruning takes a good deal of time, and is, to my mind, one of the great arguments against espaliers. Also I cannot but think that the violent removal of so much wood at this time of year must give an undesirable check to the trees.

AUGUST

I HAVE been walking round the place and looking at the trees. With the exceptions of the group of Elms in the garden, the Walnuts by the back gate, and a single old Oak, they were, I believe, planted less than a hundred years ago; indeed, I myself knew the old man who set many of them in his youth. Here, therefore, is a good opportunity for learning what trees will do in congenial soil and situations during that period of time. Well, those of them that stand alone have made splendid growth, and are now really fine objects. A number of the others, I regret to say, were allowed to become overcrowded in their youth, as will be amply proved by the fact that on the Front lawn, Shrubbery and Garden, when first I had to do with this place, I took down quite sixty trees, and ought to have taken more.

At the time, I remember, I hesitated much as to which should stand and which should die, and now I often think that it would have been better if I had considered the matter for a whole year before touching any of them. I beg those of my readers who may find themselves confronted with a similar problem to hasten very, very slowly. It is so easy to give the fatal order, to make an ugly scratch or blaze upon the bark and bring the tree down, but all the nursery-gardens in England cannot replace it in less than a century or so, if, indeed, it would grow there again at all.

One thinks that if such and such a tree were gone, the starved branches of its neighbour must occupy the air space which it has vacated. And so they will,

BEECH TREES ON OLD LAWN

sometimes, especially if it be young. But once the boughs are set in any given shape, it is most difficult to induce them to change their direction. In course of time, however, new ones will appear where light and sun fall upon the trunk, but from thirty to fifty years must go by before they attain a respectable size. I know that in some instances here the passage of more than twenty summers has not sufficed to bring trees, rendered lop-sided by the too close companionship of their kind, into any decent shape. Therefore, I say—beware of cutting out established trees in the hope of making a specimen of their neighbour, since in most cases you will not live to see that consummation.

Still, there are exceptions. Thus, immediately opposite the garden door of this house stands a good, pyramid-shaped Beech. There used to be two of them side by side, but this one had altogether outgrown its brother, though, doubtless, they were planted at the same time. Yet for some years I hesitated about cutting it out, fearing to make a gap, until I observed that the branches of the larger Beech had extended themselves upon either side of the smaller, embracing it, as it were, and guessed that if the latter were removed they would soon fill in over the intervening space. So it went, and now—about fifteen years afterwards—it would be difficult to tell that it ever existed.

Gardeners have a mania for sawing off the lower boughs of trees, because of the shade they throw upon grass and beds, quite irrespective of the effect upon their shape. Mine have suffered from this cause at some time in the past, as is shown by the numerous scars upon their bark; but now, I am glad to say, time has in most cases remedied the evil, and the graceful branches again droop down, lower often than is quite convenient. In this respect tenant-farmers are even greater sinners, for, unless watched, many of them will hack and hew at trees until they are utterly ruined, alleging, as excuse, the old bugbear—shade. I have often thought, however, that a desire for gratis firewood has much to do with this unholy zeal. I remember, many years ago, being worried by the tenant who at that time had this farm, into allowing him to operate upon three Turkey oaks, which by nature grow in a perfect pyramid, that stood in the fence between the Back lawn and what was then an arable field. A few years later, when I had more experience, I saw how fatal was my error, and allowed the strongest of the new shoots to grow again as nearly as possible from the old bough-seats. Now the trees have more or less recovered their shape, but to make this as beautiful as it was once will need another two or three decades.

In short, to grow perfectly, a tree should be planted amongst others that shelter and draw up, but do not crowd it, in protected ground, where no horned stock or horses enter. These animals are very greedy for leaves, which, indeed our ancestors used as fodder, and devour all boughs within their reach. Timber upon grazed pastures invariably shows a well-defined feed-line, which ends at such height as the longest-necked horse can stretch above the ground.

Other great enemies to trees are the new race of rural road-surveyors, very tyrannical people, like most petty office-holders, who issue notices, or, rather, commands, to the owners of properties to disbough their trees, on the ground that they overhang the roads. Of this I have just had an example on my farm at Bedingham, where a nice row of Oaks grew alongside of, but did not really injure the road. The surveyor worried my bailiff. The bailiff, without saying anything to me, gave orders to the man in charge, and the man in charge, after the manner of his kind, sawed away like a demon. When next I visited the farm, I found, to my great grief and indignation, that row of Oaks spoiled.

I imagine that the old Apples I found in this garden and certain Thorns of various species which grow about the Front lawn, were planted at the same time as the timber-trees. The Apples were quite worn out, and I did away with everyone, while of the Thorns only two or three remain, and they are failing. Most of these meet their end in gales. But the Oaks, Beeches, Limes, Walnuts, Acacias, and, perhaps, some of the Elms of certain sorts, should stand another three or four hundred years, unless someone hacks them down. It is curious, and rather melancholy, to look forward into the dim and unimaginable future, and wonder what their fate will be when one is no longer present in the flesh to protect them; when that flesh itself, perhaps, has been transformed into hard wood and rising sap and waving foliage.

By the way, I am allowing the Ivy to grow up a good many of the trunks, as it is exceedingly ornamental, and does not, I think, injure established timber so long as it is not suffered to cumber the boughs overmuch. This can be prevented by judicious stopping.

I make no excuse for having dwelt a little on this matter of trees, for to my mind they are a most important part of my subject. Many people talk as if a garden consisted only of flower-beds and cabbage-plots, but that is not my idea. Nor was it the idea of the ancients. For instance, the Garden of Eden was evidently well timbered, and so was, and, as I have seen, still is the Garden of Gethsemane. Indeed, in the East a garden nearly always means a place planted with trees, generally of some fruit-bearing kind, which thus at once afford shade, shelter, food, and relief to the eye. In short, no such place can be perfect without these—one of Nature's noblest and most lovely gifts to man—and that is why, in any temperate clime, it takes nearly a hundred years to make a real garden.

I have received a belated, but most welcome, birthday present; none other, indeed, than a collection of the Cacti and allied species — cactaceous plants is their generic name—which I admired so much at the Temple Show. I give a list of them, as they have been carefully selected, and it may prove useful to other gardeners.

Cereus Colubrinus, a quick-growing sort, from Cuba. C. Peruvianus, which is thick, ridged, and dark green, with black spines. C. Peruvianus Monstrosus, a strange plant, with a twisted and knotted stem. C. Flagelliformis, the Rat-tailed Cactus, of which I already have a specimen that bears beautiful flowers. This particular plant has been grafted by Messrs. Cannell upon some other Cactus stock, and is growing lustily. C. Atropurpurea. C. Grandiflora Speciosissimus, the lovely night-flowering Cactus that is known as Queen of the Night. I have heard much of this plant, and am very glad to possess it as I have never seen its bloom. C. Baumanii, from Peru. C. Rostratus, of which the flowers resemble C. Grandiflorus.

Of Phyllocactus, so called because their stems are shaped like leaves, P. Alatus, and P. Phyllanthoides (called German Empress). Of this the specimen sent is very small, as the stock had run out. It is said to be the most useful of the tribe, and to produce a profusion of rose-coloured flowers, which have the peculiarity of lasting well, upon the plant or as cut blooms. Judging from the size of my specimen, it will, however, be some time before I can testify to this from personal observation.

Crassula Adgavensis, a silvery, thick-leaved plant, that comes, I believe, from the Cape Colony.

Echinopsis Eyriesii. Echinopsis means " like a hedgehog," and, really, it is difficult better to describe this plant, which is a green-ridged ball. The variety Eyriesii produces a quantity of lovely flowers, of which the stems spring from the ridges. Echinopsis Multiplex, which bears large rose-hued blooms. It is light green in colour, covered with spines, and not unlike a Prickly-pear in appearance.

Echinocactus Wislizenii; this is the Fish-hook Cactus, which is found in the uninhabited parts of Arizona.

Of Opuntiæ, which genus includes the common Prickly-pear. O. Missouriensis. O. Leucotricha, which is covered with long white hairs. O. Papyracantha, which produces a growth of spines that look like shavings of white paper. The thorns on all these classes of plants are easy to account for, since growing, as most of them do, in arid deserts, they serve to protect them from being eaten by hungry animals. Even a starving donkey would shrink from lunching on certain of these Cacti. But what, I wonder, may be the use of these hairs and paper shavings, unless, indeed, they are designed to assimilate the plants to the colour of their surroundings. O. Cardona. O. Polyantha. O. Cylindrica, which has no spines, and grows to an enormous height on a single stem. (Query,—What will one do when it gets to the top of the greenhouse? Behead it, I suppose.) O. Monacantha, a flat-jointed sort, that hails from Brazil.

Bryophyllum Calycinum, a curious, fleshy-leaved plant or small shrub, which comes, I think, from the Cape Colony.

A specimen labelled Haworthia species, an Aloe-like plant, from South Africa, and H. Fasciata.

Rochea Falcata, a succulent plant, also from South Africa.

Stapelia species, a fleshy-leaved succulent. collected from the eastern portion of the Cape Colony. The flowers of Stapelias are said to be beautiful, but to smell like carrion, which is scarcely a recommendation for a greenhouse.

Mesembryanthemum Bolusii, a most extraordinary plant, I believe from South Africa, pale green in colour, with flat and fleshy leaves, of which my specimen has four. In shape, I can only compare them to split kidneys.

Mammillaria Stella-Aurata, or Golden Star, a curious plant of the Cactus tribe, clothed with rosettes of spines, and bearing little yellow blooms, which develop into a coral-coloured, berry-like fruit.

Euphorbia Splendens, which is called the Crown of Thorns, a most prickly plant, that bears a brilliant, but small and waxy, red bloom. In this I recognise an old friend, for thirty years ago a great bush of it used to flourish outside the windows of Government House in Natal.

Such is the collection of Cacti and other succulent plants of which, through the kindness of my family, I have become the proud possessor. I have stood them in the centre of the greenhouse stage, raised upon inverted pots to bring them near the glass, so that they may get as much sun as possible, for most of them, as their fleshy nature indicates, love its directest rays. They look very curious and interesting there, and at present do not occupy much room. I await the appearance of their flowers with anxiety, but I daresay that some of them will take years to bloom.

Nearly all these plants require good drainage and a mixture of pounded brick in their compost. Also they should, for the most part, be kept dry in winter.

It has been decided that an extra breadth of eighteen yards or so must be added to the Garden lawn, so as to give room for a full-sized croquet ground, in addition to the tennis-court. So I am "making a preparation," as my old gardener used to say, by hurdling off a piece of field that abuts on the Kitchen-garden pond. I have determined to make use of the native turf, which, in pursuance of this plan, has been carefully scythed over and rolled, and, when it is flat enough, will be mown with the machine. In September I propose to lift the turf, fork over the ground beneath to get out the roots of the weeds (fortunately, it will not require very much levelling—or so we think), relay the turf, and top-dress with basic slag, and, later, with wood-ashes or burnt earth, remove the worst of the weeds (this we shall try to do before it is lifted), and in the spring give a good coating of lawn-grass seed.

Observation has convinced me that the turf which grows in any particular spot is by far the best to use on that spot, for the obvious reason that the grasses composing it have here their natural habitat. Also the carting of turf, even from a short distance, is a laborious and very expensive business, and the results are frequently not satisfactory. On the Vineyard Hills, not a quarter of a mile away, I have some excellent close turf, which was used when first laying the lawn, but that grows upon a sandy soil, whereas the ground whither it must be moved is clay. When this lawn was first made some of the old field turf was left round the borders, and it has done better, and produced a finer sward than either that which was brought from the Hills or that which was sown, while, as regards the weeding, there has not been much difference. The rest of the operation will be simple, as it only involves shifting the iron railings upon one side and the addition of about fifty feet run at the top.

Of the dangers of seeding (though I admit that the Kessingland example is an instance to the contrary) I have just had some remarkable evidence. A friend who has been stopping here, a great gardener, tells me that three years ago he set to work to make a lawn-tennis court. The land having been thoroughly dug and new soil added, he sowed it with the most expensive seeds that he could buy. Results: First year, splendid; second year, fair; this year, the third, practically no grass at all. It has simply died out. Without doubt, the reason is that the seeds supplied were quite unsuited to the land and locality, and have consequently, proved non-permanent. I believe that I am right in saying that a great deal of this grass seed is grown in New Zealand, where, obviously, conditions prevail very different from those of Norfolk.

As bearing on the subject, I may mention that only a few days ago I visited a farm I own some miles away, where various pastures have been laid down within the last eight years, I paying for the seed and the tenant sowing it. On the whole, I find them doing well and making a good bottom, but the foreman, an intelligent man, told me he was sure that foreign seed had been supplied, with the result that on this soil the grasses would not grow to any height. Also, he said he did not believe that these lands would become really good meadows until the natural grasses had entirely supplanted those springing from this foreign seed.

I pointed out to him that in one field there were a good many Dog-thistles (" Boar-thistles " he called them), that should be cut away. These also, he declared, came with the seed. I suggested that the germs of them were in the land when it was laid down, but he replied, No; for if this were the case they would have shown in the arable while it was under the plough, whereas, in fact, no Boar-thistles grew on those fields before they were laid down. I am not quite satisfied that he is right, for, although the argument seems sound, it must be remembered that many seeds have enormous vitality, and will only germinate when the conditions please them. Thus, Dog or Boar-thistles may love pasture and dislike arable; indeed, now that I come to think of it, I cannot remember noting them in growing crops. If he is right, however, it is a shame that seedsmen, who are paid a high price for their goods, should supply them infested with weed germs.

Although it is scarcely a gardening topic, perhaps I may be allowed to take this opportunity of mentioning the results of certain experiments which I made in the laying down of pastures at Bedingham, which are recorded in my book "A Farmer's Year" (page 14 and elsewhere). They consisted, in brief, in mixing (on the system recommended by Mr. Elliot) two pounds each of Chicory, Burnet, and Lucerne, and one pound of Yarrow per acre with the ordinary seeds used for heavy land, the object being to insure the aëration of the subsoil by their long roots. Now, after about eight years practically all traces of these coarse seeds have disappeared from the pasture first sown with them. They have done their work and gone, killed out, I suppose, by the native grasses, and the result is that on some wretchedly poor land a really good pasture is now established.

On fields laid down six and four years ago the same thing has happened in the first instance, and is in the course of happening in the second. The Chicory, &c., is dying out, and the pastures show excellent bottoms and are doing very well. On the other hand, a piece that was not so treated, but sown only with the usual heavy-land seeds, the soil of which is of no worse quality, is not satisfactory, and this although it has been drained, folded with sheep, and dressed with kanite. I state these facts, as some readers may find it useful to follow my example and lay down heavy soils in this fashion, which I believe, however, was only applied to light land by Mr. Elliot.

In spite of all our dressings and scrubbings, that unutterable pest, American blight, or Woolly Aphis, has reappeared upon some of the espalier Apple trees in the garden, though not, I am glad to say, in anything like the same quantity as was the case last year. Also, so far as I can discover, there is none on the standard trees in the Orchard. We are dealing with it at once; Charles, armed with a brush and a fluid compound (I think that it is called Blagden's), being employed in going over every discoverable cluster. This excellent mixture causes the blight to wither and disappear before the wind blows it to other trees. Raw paraffin I have found equally effective, and sweet oil is also recommended. The woolly filaments which inclose the insects are the cause of the rapid diffusion of this plague, since, whenever the wind stirs, these enable it to float from place to place, much as Thistle-seed does in its down, or do certain sorts of spiders in their webs.

Mason and I have been discussing the Strawberries that we propose to grow next year, as the time is now at hand for taking or purchasing rooted runners. Here is our provisional list, arranged in the order in which they should come into bearing:

1. British Queen. A fine old sort, full of flavour, and a parent of many of the new hybrids. 2. Laxton's Noble. 3. Sir Joseph Paxton. 4. The comparatively new Trafalgar, of which we have now a sufficient stock. 5. The white Louis Gauthier, which I have already described, that seems to be more or less of a perpetual. 6. St. Antoine de Padoue, a true perpetual, of which we propose in future to nip the early flowers. My three rows of this sort, by the way, are again blooming nicely. In addition to these, I am buying from Messrs. Veitch two hybrids that are much recommended, fifty of Veitch's Prolific, and fifty of Veitch's Perfection, which will be sufficient to provide us with a stock. Royal Sovereign we are discarding, as, although it grows so lustily, it is not a great bearer upon our land.

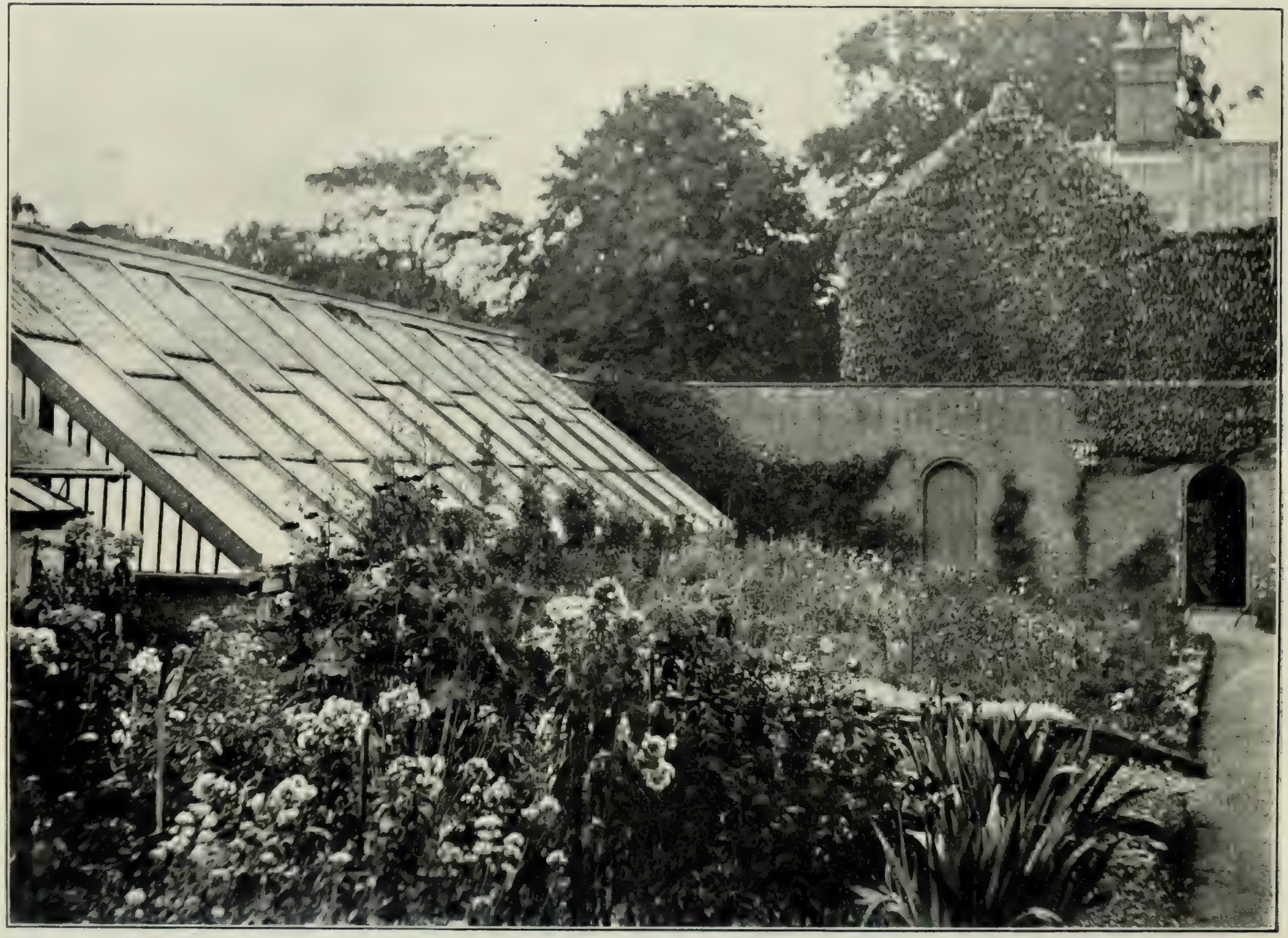
During this first week of August we have taken our runners off the plants, and set several hundreds of them in little pots, which are stood, each sort by itself, in a shady place under the shelter of the stable wall. As soon as they are established they will be moved and plunged in the open. Others destined for Kessingland, where the ground cakes so that runners do not root freely, have been dibbled into a bed close by. The great thing with these newly-moved runners is to see that they are properly watered during the first few weeks, for otherwise drought soon perishes them in their little pots.

Mr. Tracy has purchased for me at one of Messrs. Protheroe's sales a "raft" of Phalænopsis Amabilis Rimestadiana, which has now arrived. This raft is a frame of wooden bars, on to which are wired the Phalænopsis plants, I suppose by those who gather them in Java. Of these the catalogue states that there are eighty in my lot, but I must confess that a considerable portion of them look singularly dead. I presume, however, that some will revive, otherwise so experienced a grower as Mr. Tracy would not have bought them. Indeed, I see that a number are already putting out new roots. I propose to leave them on the raft for a month or two, and then pot them up in Sphagnum. No flowers are lovelier than those of the Phalænopsis, which have the further advantage of lasting a long while in beauty. I understand, too, that this variety comes from the highlands of Java, and, therefore, does not require so much heat as do some others. It is also said to be the largest, easiest to cultivate, and most beautiful of them all, so I hope that they will succeed in my Warm orchid house.

I have come to the conclusion that the daily appreciation of a garden is a pursuit best followed in solitude. To attempt this in the company of others, at least, generally gets upon the nerves. You stand staring at a plant or bed in which you find something to note or to admire, whereon your companion, or companions, after the first cursory glance of indifference, or admiration of the "How pretty!" order, often stand and stare at *you*, thinking, you are convinced, how foolish you must be to waste your time in this childish fashion, till at last you give it up and suggest a walk or a bicycle ride, or that it is time to get ready for church. Worse still is the conducting of regiments of visitors round narrow greenhouses, in which you are painfully conscious, there is little they will really care to look at, and where, as you know well, they are wondering all the while how they can dodge the damp upon the floor. It is not always thus, however, for occasionally one meets a kindred soul who has true love—of gardening—in his, or her, heart. Then what is more delightful than to slip away from the madding crowd of the tennis party, or even the more exalted atmosphere of the missionary meeting, and spend an hour alone with that congenial person, not galloping through the houses, but taking the plants pot by pot, in bloom or out of it, and giving to these the individual consideration that is their due. Still, like the young man in *Punch*—that is, the *Punch* of twenty years ago, I prefer to worship *my* Lilies alone.

The first six days of August have brought but poor weather, not much rain, it is true, but a great deal of cloud and wind, and with them a temperature quite unseasonable. Amongst other things, we have been engaged in layering our Malmaison and other greenhouse carnations, or, rather, the best of them. This we do by plunging the pots in soil in a frame, and having first nicked the layers, pegging them down to root, after which the parent plants will be thrown away. In case any of my readers should not know of it, I will inform them that the very best layering pegs can be procured from a worn-out birch-twig garden broom. Cut the binding of the broom and shake the twigs loose. Then select any that fork at the base, trim to the desired length and shape, and there you are. They are just of the right thickness, hard, and tough; moreover, one broom will provide a great quantity.

We have been stalking all the tall-growing plants, as is very necessary in this windy weather; especially the Dahlias, some of which are beginning to bloom, as are certain of the outdoor Chrysanthemums, reminding us that Autumn is coming on. Our pot Chrysanthemums, that are now making good plants, we have dosed with soot water.



OLD VINERY BORDER AND COLD ORCHID HOUSE BED

I never knew before that squirrels ate toadstools. As I was going down the drive the other afternoon on a bicycle I saw one of these charming, but mischievous, little creatures galloping along with something large and bright in its mouth. Frightened at my presence, it dropped the object and took refuge in a tree. Dismounting to investigate, I found that it was a particularly unwholesome-looking fungus, scarlet on the top and yellow underneath. Leaving it where it lay, I returned an hour or two later, and found that the squirrel had come back and devoured it nearly all. Of this there could be no doubt, as I could see its teeth marks. I only trust that it did not suffer for its temerity. But Nature generally teaches her offspring what they may or may not eat. Domesticated animals, however, seem to lose this wisdom; at anyrate, cattle and horses are frequently poisoned by certain herbs in South Africa, and, indeed, in England—witness the instances of Yew and Fool's Parsley. I never heard of wild game falling into the same mistake.

The Montbretias are coming into bloom, and how pretty are their long scapes of flower. Also, they last very well in water.

In the Orchard, we have finished cleaning the Strawberry beds, and the plants look quite neat again after their trimming and light hoeing. The Carnation bed is now very attractive, and bearing a multitude of different-coloured blooms, which will go on, I hope, until the outdoor Chrysanthemums that are planted in the centre begin to flower. This Old Vinery border has been very successful this season—Daffodils, Pansies, &c., Carnations, Indian Pinks, and hardy Chrysanthemums keeping it gay throughout the greater part of the year.

The Winter-green setting continues as usual. Certainly we should not lack for a supply of the Cabbage tribe. With them we have been planting out Leeks in the Orchard.

A gentleman who has farmed in Argentina was at a party here the other day. He gave me some interesting information about the growth of Lucerne in that country, Alfafa, as it is there called. The crops it produces on that land seem to be wonderful; so nutritious is it, moreover, that cattle fat on it as well as they do here when stall-fed upon cake and root. Although in England it wears out in about seven years, or, at any rate, becomes choked with Twitch and other grasses, in Argentina this Lucerne seems to be perfectly perennial when once established.

My informant told me also that its roots will travel enormous distances in search of moisture. Where a gully had been cut by water he himself has traced them to a depth of fifty feet! I do not know of any other plant or tree that can do as much, although in dongas in Mexico I have found roots of thorns of the Mimosa tribe that had pierced from five-and-twenty to thirty feet to reach the water-bearing strata. Obviously, Lucerne, planted upon rich virgin soil of unknown thickness, and ramifying through it to a depth of fifty feet, need not fear drought or lack of nutriment. In England I do not think that the roots go down much more than two feet: at any rate, they did not do so on the site of my croquet lawn, at Kessingland, which for many years had been under Lucerne. The reason of this variation may be that our constant rains and dews keep the fibres feeding near the surface, and do not force them to explore the subsoils in search of water.

Nemesia Suttonia has been, and still is, very pretty in the garden this year. It is an excellent border plant, with its compact shape and countless many-coloured flowers; easy to grow also. I believe that the Nemesias hail from South Africa. Acacia Lophantha is also effective just now, especially in the centres of beds. This graceful miniature tree will not stand our winter, but can be grown from seed sown under glass early in the year. Or the plants may be lifted, kept through the winter, and set out again during the following spring, by which time they make nice specimens.

Sunday, Aug. 9, was warm for a change, but, as usual, windy. The bed in front of the Cold orchid house looked very well in the sunlight that morning. In the centre is a nice specimen of Bocconia Cordata, or Plume Poppy, which stands about six feet high, and is bearing numerous panicles of the graceful flowers that contrast so well with its deeply-indented leaves. I have several other specimens of the plant in the borders, but this one is by far the best. Round it stand a ring of Phloxes, fine plants, now in their third year, crimson-pink, very light pink, and pure ivory white, all of them most delightful and effective flowers. Here the Japanese Anemones, pink and white, than the latter of which no hardy flower is to my fancy more beautiful, are beginning to blow also, another sign of the waning of the season which this year we dignify but can scarcely be said to describe by the name of summer.

Beneath these the Pansies are still in full show, nor has the yellow Doronicum Excelsum ceased its display. The Carnations on the Vinery border close by are surrounded with a fringe of Iceland Poppies, yellow and white in hue, frail, but most pleasing flowers. By the way, I cannot remember ever meeting with them in Iceland itself, and doubt whether they grow there, though it is, I think, little colder than Siberia, their home.

The two greenhouses are now very gay with Fuchsias, Geraniums and Begonias. In the colder of them a single flower of Lapigeria Alba has opened its wax-like bell. It may be remembered that at the beginning of the year I set these two plants in prepared beds at either end of the house, but I cannot say that they have grown so well as I hoped they would do. I have always found L. Alba a delicate subject; L. Rosea seems to have more constitution. In the Peach house the trees have done, and are still doing very well this year, the quantity of fruit being large, although the scarcity of sun diminishes its flavour. I regret to see signs of red spider on the leaves here, but while the trees are bearing we cannot deal with this by syringing. The Figs, also, in the Tomato house have borne abundantly, but they, too, need more sun. The Tomatoes themselves lack size from the same cause, though a yellow sort which I grow is of good flavour. I do not call them an average crop this season.

The Orchid houses are very bare just now. One of the advantages of Orchid-growing is that many of these plants are at their best when there is little in the outside garden, so one should not complain upon this score. Still, even in a small collection, there is always something to be seen. Thus, in the Cool orchid house a plant or two of the lovely white-flowered and yellow-throated Dendrobium Infundibulum is in bloom. To my mind, this "Nigro-hirsute" Dendrobium and its variety, D. Jamesianum, which has a red-stained lip, are among the best of the tribe, if only because of their lasting qualities, in which I think they are surpassed by D. Dearei alone, another pure white sort, with a green-tinged throat. Of this I have a single plant flowering in the Hot orchid house—I regret to say, my last. Some years ago there were six or seven of them, which made a noble show, but with me these plants have not proved robust.

The endurance of the flowers of D. Dearei is really remarkable. I remember Mr. Tracy telling me that once he sent some plants of this Orchid to be exhibited in America. They were in bloom when they left England, and when they returned to him again they were still in bloom, and apparently little the worse. Among other things in the Cool orchid house is a plant of Anguloa which I bought a few years ago as a new species from the Philippines. It is now blooming for the first time, and is a splendid thing, with enormous, cream-hued flowers. By it Anguloa Uniflora Treyerani, a Peruvian species, is also in beauty. It bears three flowers, which are white, lined with pink. Above this hang some plants of Oncidium Crispum, one of them bearing glorious trusses of rich, russet-hued, hawthorn-scented flowers. Although it wears out in time, I recommend the cultivation of this Orchid to amateurs.

In the Intermediate house Cattleya Harrisoniana, which has bulbs nearly two feet high, and its varieties, are showing their lovely and welcome flowers, but here there is nothing else. In the Hot orchid house, with the exception of a few things recently described, Oncidium Papilio, the Butterfly Orchid, is the only thing in bloom. It hangs from its long stem like some gorgeous insect upon a bending wire. Let the novice, by the way, take note that these stems should not be cut off even when the flower has dropped from them, since dead and unpromising as they seem, other blooms will appear in place of those that fall.

While I was walking to the Orchard past the end of the stable a curious thing happened to me. Here always build a number of house-martins, that is, when the sparrows wlll allow them to do so, and pretty it is to see the round heads of the young birds projecting from the hole in the nest on the look-out for the insects which their parents bring them in such abundance. On this occasion one of the mother-martins, with an indignant twitter, by way of protest at my presence, swept down from the nest and struck me in the face with its wing. That this was no accident I am certain, since I was not looking up, and wore a very wide-brimmed Panama-straw hat. It is obvious, therefore, that to reach my face the bird must have passed under the brim of my hat. I have never known these little creatures so bold before, but I remember a pair of swallows that nested here a few years ago, which always used to swoop at my head when I appeared in the garden in the morning, as they habitually do at cats, while I amused myself by trying to catch them.

On the 10th, which was thundery, with a cold wind, we sowed some Cabbage-lettuces, also autumn Onions to be planted out in the spring, the latter in a sheltered bed by the Cool orchid house. Further, all hands were employed in a mighty "clean up" preparatory to a Primrose League Fête to be held here on the 12th; weeding, clipping the Yew-fence bank, and thereby making it look very ugly, rolling, mowing grass, &c., which cleaning-up went on whenever the weather would permit, till the Primrose League hosts began to march in.

A beautiful Lilium Auratum has come out in the greenhouse. It is certainly a gorgeous flower, with its spots and yellow ribs, but to me its odour is very overpowering, even when stood in the hall.

On the 11th we tidied the houses in frantic haste, and also trimmed up the Raspberry bed. During the afternoon it set in to rain in the good old fashion, which we have rarely experienced of late years. Down it came in one straight, steady downpour until about eight the next morning, during which time our rain-gauge showed that nearly two inches of water had fallen. There was now no doubt about the working of the new drain, or, indeed, of any other, for the garden-pond was filled high above the outlet pipe, and the drains themselves vanished beneath the flood. Above a certain level, however, it does not hold water, I imagine because of the sandy and chalky patch of which I have spoken. We must take this out and fill in with cement, or better still cut a trench behind to cram it full of clay.[1] The Lawn pond also is almost overflowing, and some of the poor Nymphæas can be seen blooming away in its depths. Certainly we are making up for our lack of rainfall in recent years, but as I have begun harvest, the circumstance is not one that fills me with satisfaction. Others are worse off, however, for scores of acres of marsh hay are still lying—or floating—about in the low meadows. So heavy was the rain that the overflow water running down the Orchard drain-ditch washed in the sides in several places, a thing I have never known to happen before.

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[1] See footnote, page 55.

However, it held up for the Fête, and Primrose Leaguers are hardy folk, who mock at sopping grass, and sit contentedly for hours in the damp to watch amateur theatricals, and somewhat less contentedly, to listen to political orations. It was rather disappointing that the garden should have been so ruined by rain on this occasion, also that there should be so few Orchids in flower. Our guests were very considerate, and did no harm in the houses (I noticed that Mason locked up the Peaches and Figs). A Cattleya knocked down and smashed was the only damage I could discover.

Thursday, the 13th, was by comparison, fine and warm. On this day we re-potted the white-flowered Vandas Denisoniana, which they needed, as they had not been done for some years. It was rather a ticklish job, as these Vandas throw out fleshy air-roots, many of them over two feet in length. Our procedure was to fill the bottom of the pot with crocks, then, as best we could, to work the long roots round its side, sifting in more crocks, a little charcoal, and some leaf-mould, and finishing up by inserting Sphagnum moss into every available hollow, trimming off the same neatly atop. Now that they are done they look nice, and should, I think, flourish. Denisoniana is an easy species to grow, and ought to be more cultivated. Outside we were grass-cutting, edge-trimming, drive-sweeping, and picking up pieces of paper after the Fête.

Friday, the 14th, was again very wet, and the paper-picking, &c., continued. Also we re-potted more Orchids of various sorts, among them my two precious C. Insigne

Cobbianum, the only specimens of the desirable yellow varieties that I possess, as I have not come across any others within reach of what I care to spend on Orchids. Both plants are growing very nicely, each of them showing a particularly fine bloom bud in the new growth. Still, although it is rather late to touch them, perhaps, the best rule being to pot Insignes immediately after flowering, I thought that they might like a shift. Now I am glad that we came to this decision, as we found that the vendor of the plants had potted them in leaf-mould, faced with Sphagnum, allowing but very little drainage, a somewhat dangerous combination, which in one case had resulted in a good many rotten roots. I hope that they will not feel the disturbance. This time we used peat, a safer material with plants that are valued.

These yellow Insignes seem to throw up their blooms somewhat earlier than the ordinary sorts. At any rate, an imported root which I have flowered produced last year common Insignes Montanum upon one side, and on the other a very nice light yellow bloom, though not of the quality of Cobbianum, showing that two varieties had grown together, probably in their native habitat. On the yellow sort the flower stalk is already well up; not so on its companion. I meant to separate them before, but it was forgotten, so we have performed the operation to-day, and found the roots very much intertwined. Again I hope that no harm will ensue.

On Saturday, the 15th, a furious gale began, accompanied by fierce showers of rain. Really, the weather this year falls little short of a national catastrophe. We had to go round attending to the Dahlias, some of which had torn out their stakes and were lying prone. Of the few Apples that we have the greater number were blown down, and have been collected for tarts. This year an Apple is quite a curiosity. In the Intermediate house my one specimen of Cattleya Schofieldiana has come into bloom. It is a handsome, lurid-looking flower, spotted like a toad, in colouring a mixture of yellow, purple, and green, and it smells like carrion, especially when the sun shines. I do not wish for any more of this Cattleya.

In fiction as readers will have noticed, Orchids are flowers much affected by the Wicked. Not long ago I read a novel in which the villain (if I remember right, a particularly rich and unwholesome specimen of his class) was said to "express his soul in Orchids." I think the author must have meant that he expressed that part of his unpleasant nature in Cattleyas Schofieldiana. Surely, all Orchids should not be thus libelled. For instance, a female angel might express her soul in Odontoglossums Crispum, or Cœlogynes Cristata, and therefrom run no risk of misinterpretation.

The connection between appearance and odour in some flowers is really quite remarkable. From the very look of it one would expect C. Schofieldiana to smell, or, rather, to stink, as it does, *i.e.* something like a dead musk rat in a cesspool. The case of many poisonous plants is similar though not identical. Thus, no person of observation could consider the black green leaves, ominous purple blooms, and dangerous-looking fruit of Deadly Night-shade without guessing that this creeper was an enemy to man and beast.

Yesterday Mr. Tracy sold at Protheroe's a fine importation of Cattleya Trianæ, of which he kindly bought me about a dozen selected plants. Calling in at the station on Saturday evening I found that they had arrived, and, not liking to leave them there till Monday, or to send anyone for them on Sunday, I gaily said that I would carry them up. Before I had gone fifty yards I regretted my decision, for they were packed in an uncorded box, of a size that made it impossible to get one's arm around it. I carried that box upon my hips till they ached. Then I tried my shoulders, and found that I could only just reach the top of it with my finger tips, an operation that soon suggested to my mind the probable effects of a Chinese torture. Ultimately I adopted the Kaffir expedient, and balanced it on my head, to the great damage of my straw hat. Thus, hung round also with a loose coat and stick, I advanced through the village of Ditchingham, affording infinite amusement, and even delight, to its inhabitants.

However, I got that box home at last, and, what is more, unpacked it, for all the men had gone away, sorted and checked the plants by the catalogue, arranged them on a shelf in the cooler Orchid house, and watered them. They are in splendid condition, and most of them quite unusual in their manner of growth, some of the pseudo-bulbs being exceedingly long and thin, very divergent from the type. I hope that the flowers may prove so also.

To-night, for the first time, I heard the blackbirds make their autumn chatter in the Shrubbery, which, perhaps more from association than from anything in its quality, I always think a melancholy sound. I cannot remember if I said that my Cattleyas Harrisoniana have now begun to flower nicely, and very welcome are their bunches of mauve and purple bloom in the houses at this dull time of the year. I seem to have two sorts, the flowers of one of which are much larger than of the other, and are mauve in hue rather than purple. The slugs appreciate these blooms as much as I do, for on entering the Intermediate house yesterday morning I found one quite destroyed and another slimed all over. Last night Mason came and hunted with a bicycle lamp, which I can recommend as a capital implement for slug-capture. I think that he slew six, though none of them were very large. It is wonderful how cunningly these creatures contrive to hide themselves in the daytime. Often when re-potting Orchids I have found them among the crocks, where they establish a regular lair, reached generally through the hole in the bottom. To-day we have again been tying up our Dahlias.

Sunday, the 16th, was cold and blowy, but finer on the whole. I never saw wheat of such a peculiar colour as it is this year. On my way to pay my weekly visit to a neighbour of horticultural mind, I noticed that some of mine, which has been twisted by the wind and wet into little heaps, seemed to be green, black, and yellow in strips. My neighbour lives by the river Waveney, which had been flooded. Being a naturalist, she was attracted by the proceedings of some sparrows, that for hours hopped up and down on and in the brink of the flood water. At last she found out the reason—they were fishing, for she saw one of them with a minnow in its beak.

Sparrows are very odd birds as regards their feeding habits. For most of the year, undoubtedly, they live on grain and vegetables, but, as I think I have said, while they are rearing young their habits change. This I have an excellent opportunity of observing just now. My study has a skylight, closed in beneath with a flat glass screen, and having sides above that open to the air. Naturally, all sorts of insects, such as flies, wasps, and moths, collect upon this screen, a fact that has been discovered by a pair of nesting sparrows. Every afternoon they arrive and set to work to devour an almost incredible number of the insects. Their manner of killing these, especially if large, is peculiar, for they seize and shake them as a terrier does a rat, and then frequently pull off the wings and legs, or even break the victim into pieces, jointing it, as it were, that it may be more conveniently swallowed. All of these things I can see distinctly through the glass, as they take not the slightest notice of human beings beneath.

A tame bird that we have in the house, which was brought from South America—it is called a "troopial," and, though black and yellow, belongs, I believe, to the starling tribe—is also great at catching insects. Wasps he delights in, but—see the knowledge of the creature—before swallowing them he always pulls out their stings. I should like to try him with a hornet, but it is too cold for these to appear this year. Also I wish I knew whether the sparrows remove the stings of the wasps they catch, a thing of which I am not near enough to them to make sure.

On Monday, the 17th, it poured with more than common fury, and the water is simply pumping out of my new drain in a stream half as thick as the pipe. Knowles has not come to work, and Charles is engaged in washing the outsides of the pots in the Cool orchid-house. In the afternoon, when it cleared up a little, we did some gravel-rolling and mowed the bit of meadow which is to be added to the croquet ground. Also, we potted up the Cattleyas Trianæ bought from Mr. Tracy's importation at Protheroe's. Many growers prefer to hang imported Cattleyas head downwards until new roots appear, and when the plants have been knocking about a long while and have lost their leaves; this, I agree, is a good plan; but if they are still well-leaved and have suffered little, I do not think it necessary.

This is how we treat such pieces: First, we trim them, removing all dead leaves and bulbs, &c., and washing them with a brush in a strong solution of X L insecticide in order to destroy the eggs of Cattleya fly or any other insect pest that may have been imported with them. Then we fill washed pots of suitable size, three parts full of clean crocks, over which we place a layer of Sphagnum moss. Next one or two sticks, according to the size of the plant, are driven to the bottom of the pot to serve as supports until the new roots are established, these sticks having a notch cut

CORNER OF ELM-TREE GARDEN

in them to hold the bast from slipping down. Now the Cattleyas are set, not too deep, lest water should lodge in them and rot the eyes, and tied to the sticks with bast; a few lumps of fibrous peat are worked round the base; and the pot is finished off with Sphagnum, arranged in a cone-shaped mound, so that the centre stands higher than the sides, and neatly clipped with scissors.

I see that a correspondent of *Gardening Illustrated* (I wish that it would cut its learned pages) actually advocates the preservation of wasps because they kill aphis fly, and states that he never allows a nest to be destroyed, with excellent results to his garden. Truly, opinions differ in matters horticultural! For my part, I prefer to deal with aphis by means of a quassia solution, and consider the wasp one of the most pestilent enemies that the gardener has to face. The damage that it does to all fruit is simply incalculable, as anybody can find out who troubles to walk round his Apples and Pears—if he has any—when they are ripening. The sparrow or tomtit begins by pecking at them, and the wasp goes on till that fruit is only fit for the rubbish heap.

With Plums or Grapes, if they can get at them, they are even worse; indeed, however many may be destroyed in bottles half filled with beer and sugar, the only efficient protection is to inclose the fruits or bunches in muslin bags—a laborious and expensive process. The one thing that wasps will not eat, so far as my experience goes, is Tomatoes; indeed, I always like to set a few of these plants in the Peach house, as I believe that their odour keeps wasps away. I consider that noxious insect's sole recommendation is that nothing can beat it as a scavenger.

On the 18th the awful weather continued—driving showers of rain and a heavy gale. While we were sitting at lunch a good-sized bough was suddenly torn from the big Elms, and fell with a great crash, which made me thankful that nobody was walking underneath them. Generally, boughs fall from these Elms in perfectly still weather, several having come down thus during my time. The only indication that such a catastrophe is pending is the appearance—sometimes—of a damp spot upon the gravel, caused, no doubt, by the drip of sap from the limb which is about to fall. Owing to this habit of theirs, I consider Elms very dangerous trees, and, personally, would never plant them in a garden or near a road.

We went on with our pot-washing in the houses, re-potted Primulas, Cinerarias, and some Lycastes, and made sowings of Foxgloves, Saponarias (or Soapworts), Eryngiums (or Sea-hollies), which look like thistles, but really, I believe, belong to the Parsley tribe, and Brompton Stocks. It was bitterly cold this night, and in cycling back from Bedingham I again heard the blackbirds setting up their winter chatter in the Earsham woods and the robin piping his December tune. On August the 18th this struck me as depressing.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 19th, Mason took the pony and cart, and made a solemn round of calls upon the gardeners of the neighbouring houses. This is more or less of an annual ceremony, and one to which I have no cause to object, as it is good that gardener should meet gardener; also he returns, bringing his sheaves with him, in the shape of various flower roots and cuttings. To-day he has brought home a bundle of cuttings of two very pretty Ivies, one green and white and one golden-leaved; also the seeds of some Tree-Lupins.

In the afternoon we went on with the sticking of Chrysanthemums, sowed the Tree-Lupin seed, and layered some Carnations, nicking them at the joints that were pegged down. Also we re-potted my one Lælia Elegans, which is believed to be a natural hybrid, between Lælia Purpurata and Cattleya Guttata. I am told that it is beautiful, but my plant, which I have had for seven or eight years, has never flowered, although its general health seems to be good. I have now moved it into the Hot house and hung it close to the roof, a treatment which, it may be remembered, I found to answer in the case of Cattleya Gigas when it refused to bloom. To-day was fine, but cold.

In walking past Ditchingham Lodge the other day I saw hobbling about the garden the macaw which belongs to my tenants there, and was sorry to hear that his health has been indifferent of late. Although he has nothing to do with a garden, except that he lives in one, only taking shelter in a coal-shed at night or when the weather is very cold, the history of this bird deserves to be chronicled.

It was given to my brother-in-law, Baron A. d'Anethan, about a dozen years ago in Brazil, from whom it passed to its present owners. Baron d'Anethan himself told me that the family who presented it to him had assured him that this identical macaw had been in their possession for a *hundred and twenty years*, there being no record to show its age at the time when it was acquired by their forefather. He had no doubt but that this story was perfectly true, as the circumstance was well known in Brazil. In travelling to England the bird lost one eye through an accident, but, notwithstanding this, and the utter change of climate, during the last twelve years it has remained in perfect health and splendid plumage, until the so-called summer of 1903 affected it with the cramp, from which it is at present suffering. Surely this is a wonderful age, certainly over a hundred and thirty years, for a bird to attain. Somebody told me the other day, however, that a keeper of the parrot-house—I think at the Zoological Gardens—had informed her that the circumstance is by no means incredible, as macaws are remarkable for their longevity.

Thursday, the 20th, was again dull and heavy with rain in the middle of the day. Truly, the situation is growing desperate. Our hope now is that the weather may change next Saturday, when there is a new moon, and St. Swithin's forty days expire. These beliefs may be mere superstition, but, if so, among country folk they are even longer lived than the macaw.

We pulled our Spring-onions in the Orchard to-day, throwing them to dry upon a neighbouring bed, and raking in some Turnip seed in their place, but without re-digging the soil. Our Onions have not been a satisfactory crop, partly owing to the wire-worms that are such a plague in the Orchard this year, of which we found a number on their roots, and partly to the wretched season. Also we top-dressed the Chrysanthemums, lopped branches of trees that hung over the drives, and swept and rolled the lawns.

In re-potting two large plants of Cypripediums Dauthierii, which I have always believed to be a garden hybrid, but which Mr. Williams sets down as a variety of Cyp. Harrisianum, I noticed a curious circumstance, difficult to explain. Both plants have splendid foliage, and look in the best of health, and both were shifted on the same day two years ago and into the same compost. But when we turned them out we found that one had the most magnificent roots that I think I ever saw on any Cypripedium. They were simply splendid, a veritable mass, thick, fleshy, and unspotted from disease. So much was this the case, indeed, that we did not venture to touch them, but contented ourselves with removing the ball, including the crocks that it inclosed, to a larger pot, and ramming some new soil round it. The roots of the other specimen, on the contrary, were very indifferent, many of them being quite rotten, so that we were obliged to cut away freely and wash. Why this should be so I cannot say, especially as both plants look equally healthy atop.

I think that the people who talk about the difficulties of Orchid-growing overlook the fact that many sorts of this great family require infinitely less attention than do the most ordinary greenhouse plants. Compare, for instance, the Cyps. and the familiar Chrysanthemum. All that the vast majority of the former want are a suitable temperature and structure to grow in, to be kept clean and free from insects, and re-potting once every two years, an operation which should not take more than five minutes. The Chrysanthemum, per contra, must be struck and prevented from damping, must be shifted at least twice, must be heavily manured, stood abroad on ashes or boards, sticked, moved under shelter at the proper season, disbudded, fumigated to prevent rust and so forth. Then, after it has flowered, it is thrown away, that is, unless the practice is adopted of planting it out in the spring and lifting and re-potting again in the autumn; one that for various reasons has many disadvantages. Certainly the Orchid absorbs much less time and care; moreover, if it is properly grown, the individual plant goes on from season to season till it becomes like an old friend, with whose habits, beauties, virtues, and failings we are intimately acquainted.

On the 21st, which was fine for a wonder, there was a garden-party, so most of our time was occupied with the usual clean-up. However, we removed the net from the Raspberries, and cleared round our three rows of St. Antoine de Padoue, in preparation for setting it over them. This wonderful strawberry is now in full bloom, and covered with ripening fruit again, a fact that the wasps (when tired of eating aphis fly!) do not fail to appreciate.

Saturday, the 22nd, the day of the anxiously awaited new moon, was fine, but threatening. Knowles has been away for a week, suffering, it appears, from Mushroom poisoning. Until yesterday I supposed that he was taking a holiday, or that his services were not immediately required. Then, hearing the truth, I asked a nephew of mine, who is a doctor, and chanced to be staying in the house, to go to see him. He reported that there was no longer much the matter, and that the poisoning had taken place too many days ago for him to express any certain opinion on its cause.

To-day the sufferer has reappeared, and told me his moving tale. It seems that somebody gave him the Mushrooms, which he declares were perfectly wholesome-looking, fresh and undoubted, and that he ate the whole lot, three or four of them, for breakfast, no one else in his house touching them. After breakfast he began to suffer from severe vomiting and other delights, and in this state continued for several days. He informed me also that he hears that another family partook a year or two ago of Mushrooms gathered from the same place, namely, under an Oak tree in a certain meadow, and were seized with a like sickness. This seems to show that there is reason in the prejudice against Mushrooms which grow under trees. I confess to regarding the whole tribe with suspicion, and especially am I alarmed when some authority presents me at breakfast with a doubtful-looking fungus, which he avows is splendid eating. For in this matter, more than most even, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Almost am I inclined to declare with friend Knowles that "I ain't agoing to eat no more of thim there musherooms, not if I knows it!"

To-day we netted the St. Antoine de Padoue strawberries, and planted out some Lettuces. Also we lifted a good number of Potatoes in the Orchard of the variety known as Windsor Castle. They are large tubers, but some of them show signs of disease, and I think that it will be well to consume them as soon as possible.

Sunday, the 23rd, was fine and quiet, though cloudy. In walking round the garden I noticed that the Tropæolum Tuberosum, a Peruvian species, with scarlet and yellow blooms, is a mass of flowers, and looks very handsome on the garden wall, as also does the well-known

Canary creeper, which is another of the Tropæolums, Peregrinum, or Aduncum, to wit. This it never seems needful to sow, as, however much it is rooted out, it springs afresh every year, and really is most useful with its masses of yellow bloom. By the way, I tried the experiment of leaving some of the pretty mottled bulbs of Tropæolum Tuberosum in the soil last year to see if they would stand the winter, but although the season was mild, they all perished. In our district these tubers must be lifted in autumn and stored till spring.

On Monday, the 24th, it poured again. Truly, this is a wretched year for the garden, and for the fruits of the earth generally. Our Peas are mildewed—never do I remember so bad a season for Peas; the Cucumbers in the frames are very poor, owing to a lack of sun, and, for the same reason, the Peaches and Tomatoes refuse to ripen properly, even under glass. We might as well have saved ourselves the trouble of planting the latter out of doors, for although the top-lights of frames have been placed against them for shelter, they will not even flower.

Maize, too, is a complete failure, although the young plants were pushed on in the greenhouse; and on my farm, where I generally cultivate a breadth, for cattle food, it has grown so badly that I have been obliged to plough it up. As for outdoor fruit, it simply is not. Only Lettuces, runner Beans, and a few other moisture-loving things seem to do well. Everything else is drowned and starved with cold. All that we could do to-day was to scythe over the grass on the croquet-ground extension, roll the tennis-court, and finish clipping the tall Myrobella fence round the Orchard, as it is far too wet to stand upon the land.

On the 25th much the same conditions prevailed, so we planted out some Lettuces, and made sowings of Pansies, Geums, and a few other things.

Wednesday, the 26th, has proved a finer day, with a rapidly rising glass, but I cannot say that I like the look of the weather. Although it is still very wet, we have manured and dug the land for the new Strawberry bed. Also we top-dressed a quantity of the Cattleyas Mossiæ that came from Venezuela last year with leaf-mould and Sphagnum, as I think that the small pots in which they were placed will carry them for another season, and, indeed, their new roots are too much advanced to make it desirable to interfere with them. A few, however, we were obliged to shift. Mason departs this evening upon his annual four days' holiday. I wonder what a Government clerk would say if he were expected to put up with the amount of leave that falls to the lot of the gardener.

After much consideration, I have made up my mind to shift back the railing round the Pond garden twenty feet clear. This will allow seven feet for a Beech or Box fence (I should like Holly, but it takes too long to grow), and thirteen feet for a really good perennial border, which I propose to divide with a little two-foot-six wide turfed path. Such a border ought to look very handsome in time, especially as here it cannot be overshadowed by trees, and when once established should not take much labour. A lot of stuff, however, will be needed to fill it properly.

On Thursday, the 27th, we had half a gale of wind, but no rain. The air seems to be full of Thistle seeds, which float here, there, and everywhere, whence I know not, for I have cut all my thistles on the pastures round. Probably they come from miles away, and I imagine that the reason of their plenty this year is that, owing to the vile weather, the Barleys are still standing uncut. One of the evidences of the general poverty of farmers which prevents them from employing sufficient labour is the prevalence of Thistles in their corn. Talking of Thistles, the two yellow-bloomed ones, with mottled foliage, from Trieste, which I think I mentioned earlier in the year as having been raised from seed that was given me, are now in full bloom. They make really handsome border plants, even in a climate so different from that of their place of origin, and I intend to increase them.

Mason having departed, Charles is now in charge, and looks quite important bustling about with a basket of vegetables on his arm. A little responsibility is an excellent thing for the young in every walk of life. We have been grass-cutting and fence-trimming to-day.

The 28th was fairly fine, but at night the glass was falling and the sky looked ominous. So far the outgoing of St. Swithin's forty days and the incoming of the new moon have not done us much good. We have been earthing up Celery in the Orchard, first tying round each stick with a piece of bast (strawberry runners are even better if available) to hold the leaves together. This crop looks well, being good in colour and lusty in growth, which rather surprises me, as when I visited the Lincolnshire Fens, the great growers there told me they dreaded too much wet, because it rots the heads.

A very pretty yellow Montbretia is in flower in the Pond-border, I think it is called Solfatura; another good yellow one that I have is Montbretia or Tritonia—for they all belong to this species—Flava. The Montbretias are really beautiful bulbous plants, and have the merit of being extremely easy to grow and increase. The gardener should remember, however, to lift them every year, and replant the bulbs singly, as they do much better thus. Almost any soil seems to suit them.

Saturday, the 29th, was cloudy and windy. As the land proved again too wet to stand on we did odd jobs, such as sweeping and rolling the drives, weeding the gravel, &c. Also we filled in the gaps made by wire-worm in the plantation of young Leeks in the Orchard from a bundle that had been plunged in reserve. I have some gas lime laid up, and propose to dress a good deal of this land with it as opportunity offers, since the wire-worm seems to laugh at any milder remedy. The fact is that when we dug up the turf here it should have been pared off and burnt, instead of being trenched in. This I did not like to do at the time, because rotted turf undoubtedly makes a splendid soil, and I never thought that the wire-worm would prove so prevalent. Well, like other folk, the gardener must buy his experience.

It is evident to me that a good number of the pyramid Apples which I planted last year between the standards in the Orchard will have to be moved, if not this autumn, then the next. The big trees on the Free and Crab stocks have made so much growth this wet season that before long their boughs will come too near together to allow of anything flourishing beneath them, and to cut them back barbarously would be a pity. Doubtless, also, the trenching of the soil about the roots has stimulated their vigour. In fact, in another few years, with the exception of the Asparagus bed at its end, and the plantations of Rhubarb and Globe Artichokes, the Orchard as a kitchen garden will be a thing of the past. By that time, however, I hope that most of the weeds may have vanished, so that it will only need an occasional hoeing to keep them down and the soil open. I do not believe in the laying away of Orchards in which Pyramids are planted to grass, as this sucks their roots or otherwise evilly affects them; also it absorbs a great deal of labour in mowing.

On Monday, the last day of the month, there was a very heavy south-west gale ; indeed, it has been blowing for days, and looks as though it meant to continue to do so.

We have been lifting more Windsor Castle Potatoes in the Orchard. There are some very fine tubers among them, but, as may be seen by various unmistakable signs, it is time that they were out of the ground. The Gooseberries which I trained in rows to wires have made a tremendous growth this year, and will need judicious thinning. The plan is a good one in its results, but it implies the expenditure of more time and labour than does the ordinary bush system. We are now mowing the croquet-ground extension with the machine, and, really, the turf that was only a grass field a little while ago presents quite a good face. I wish, however, that I had taken it in hand at the beginning of the summer and weeded out some of the Plantains, of which there are many.

Our outdoor Mushroom bed has so far been a failure this wet year, for, do what we will, the slugs eat off the little buttons so soon as they appear.

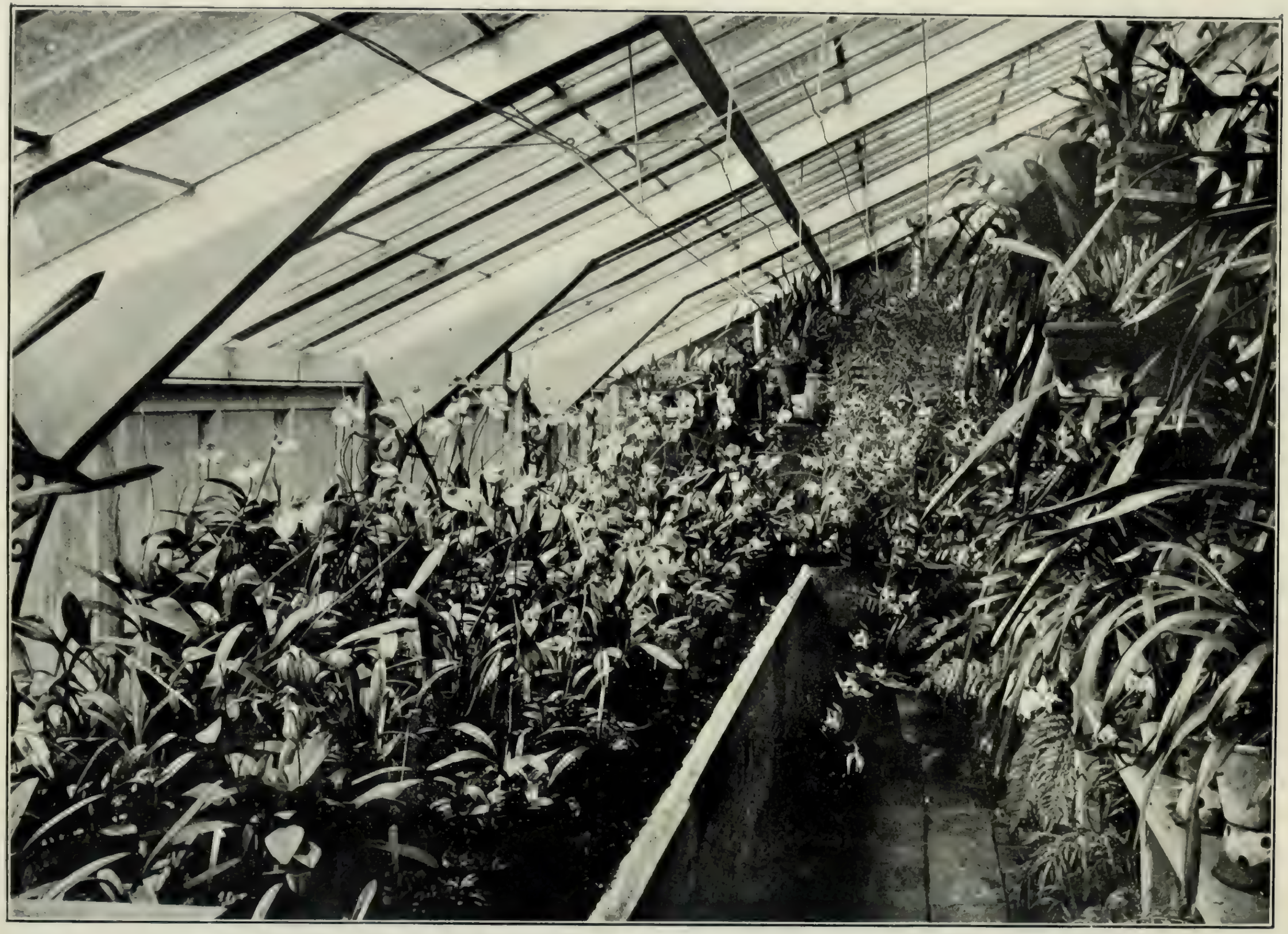
And so farewell to the disastrous month of August.

SEPTEMBER

Every year or two my Orchid-growing friend, Mr. H. A. Tracy, comes from Twickenham to spend a few days as my guest at the house-farm, and I only hope that he finds his visits as pleasant as I do. To me, indeed, they are delightful, for it is a real joy to spend an hour or two with him every morning in the Orchid houses, going over and discussing the plants one by one, occasions upon which he lightens my darkness out of the inexhaustible stores of his thirty or forty years of experience. The other day he arrived, and at once went round, I, I regret to say, being absent. His verdict when we met was—that "all is very well, except the Dendrobiums, which are going back." Alas! I knew it; the fact is that I have not enough heat for Dendrobiums, and have no intention of replacing my stock, as there are other things that I can grow better in the limited space at my command.

Two Orchids which I have in bloom he especially admired — a Brassavola Digbyana, with twin flowers, bought as an imported piece, which flowers, he says, are the largest he has ever seen; and the Anguloa, that I have already described as coming from the Philippines. This he thought so fine that he has sent one of the flowers to Mr. J. O'Brien, the well-known authority, who writes to me:

"The Anguloa Mr. Tracy sends is Anguloa Uniflora Eburnea, figured in Lindenia VIII., page 27. It is immensely superior to the ordinary form, and I shall further remark on it in the *Gardener's Chronicle.*"



MASDEVALLIA HOUSE

I am glad to be the possessor of so fine a thing. The Brassavola I am exchanging with Mr. Tracy, as I have several of these plants, and he is anxious to use it for hybridising purposes with some particularly fine Cattleya that he has now in flower. Further, I have arranged to let him take nearly all my collection of Masdevallias, except the white M. Tovarensis, the Macruras, the Chimæras, and a few others of the curious hooded sorts. I have grown these Masdevallias with great success for the last five or six years, and many of them are fine specimens, but now I think I should like a change, as I have only one Cold orchid house, and they occupy its entire front bench. This in future will be devoted to perhaps the loveliest Orchid that grows — Odontoglossum Crispum. Of Crispums Mr. Tracy says he has a fine stock, which he imported about three years ago, that have not yet flowered in this country. This, of course, is the state in which to buy them, as one never knows what one may get. In his own interest, however, he ought to have disposed of these plants before, since, if they were now taken to the sale-room, seeing them so well established, it would be difficult to make buyers believe that they have not yet bloomed, and, therefore, are still an unknown quantity.

What a splendid speculation unflowered Odontoglossums are — sometimes — will be seen from the following instance that Mr. Tracy has just related to me. About three years ago he sold a plant of Crispum —I think it was from the same importation of which mine will be a part—to a lady for five shillings. Last year this lady wrote to him, saying that it had a very fine flower, and asked him to come to see it. But as many people do this, and the results are not generally worth the journey, he did not go.

A few weeks ago, however, she wrote again, inclosing a bloom, which, when he saw it, he fell down and worshipped. For it was a wondrous thing, of immense size, and richly marked in a fashion in which no known Crispum ever was before. He took the train and his cheque-book and visited that lady, to be met by the intelligence that she had cut off two more of the flowers and worn them at a garden party, yes, she had worn that priceless Odontoglossum at a garden-party, and, some good fate directing her, as it chanced, very wisely. For at this party there happened to be a gentleman who knew something of Orchids, and he told her that this Crispum was worth £500. Now Mr. Tracy was not prepared, as a business speculation, to give £500 for the very plant which he had sold for five shillings. So he bargained, and in the end purchased it for less. That night saw him travelling north with the precious Crispum in a box to the home of a great and wealthy Orchid-grower.

"How much?" said that enraptured gentleman.

Mr. Tracy named a price, and the transaction was concluded on the spot.

But this is not the end of the story. The new owner exhibited the plant, upon which three flowers now remained, a few days later at the Drill-hall in London, where, I understand, he was offered and refused *seventeen hundred guineas* for the same. Think of it! He refused the value of a good-sized farm for that one frail and perishable plant! More, another client of Mr Tracy's bitterly reproached him for not giving him the chance of purchasing it, which he said he would gladly have done at 1000 guineas. But, as Mr. Tracy explained to me, although he thought that he could get more than he received for the Crispum, the gentleman who bought it had once done him a kindness, and he was therefore determined that he and no other should have the first opportunity of acquiring this unique specimen. Also, as he remarked, his profit was a good one on what he paid, and he was therefore satisfied. That these things are so I can testify, for he showed to me an enraptured letter on the subject of this Orchid from its purchaser, who had just potted off the back portion of it in the hope of obtaining another break. Still, it does strike me as a marvellous thing that in times when most people do not find money too plentiful, there are yet a considerable number of persons who are willing to pay these gigantic sums for plants of unusual characteristics. Well, so much the better for dealers, whose business is not all profit.

Thus, Mr. Tracy himself has just met with a heavy loss. He bought the right to collect the Crispums on a certain area—I think in the Pacho district of Colombia—and sent out a man, who gathered an enormous number. When they arrived all of them except ten or fifteen per cent. were dead, which meant that Mr. Tracy was much out of pocket on the venture.

Now it may be remembered that a stick of Crispums which I received about the same time had also suffered thus, only three plants out of the twenty being alive, as also had those with which this stick was sent. I had a long discussion with Mr. Tracy as to the causes of the disaster, which in this instance cannot be attributed to the very moderate length of time that the plants had taken in transit. We came to the conclusion that it was due to two things, the lack of air in the hold of the ship, and, perhaps, the cargo of Pine-apples which she took aboard at Trinidad. This first inference seems to be proved by the following circumstances. Mr. Tracy's collector brought home two or three cases of the same consignment, which he managed to store in one of the hatchways, where they were exposed to the air. Everyone of these plants proved to be in perfect condition, whereas those that travelled in the hold had for the most part perished. The second is a mere conjecture, but he noted when he opened his cases that they reeked of the odour of the cargo of Pine-apples, and it seems quite possible that this odour may be deleterious to Orchid life. Further investigation might prove or disprove the point.

Other plants that I exchanged with him were my Angræcums Eberneum, which I have kept for years, but have never bloomed, owing I think, to lack of sufficient heat; some of the white Vandas Denisoniana, of which I had more than I want; a few large Cattleyas Speciosissima, a somewhat shy-blooming sort; and a small plant of C. Mossiæ, purchased as a white variety, a matter that cannot be proved for another two years, as its new growths, being weak, lack bloom sheaths. Also I gave him half of a couple of roots of small varieties of Cymbidium from Formosa, which will prove, I imagine, only of botanical interest, and a few odds and ends. These plants—there may have been between one and two hundred of them in all—we spent a morning in turning out of their pots and baskets and packing in a large deal case, since, having a staff of men, repotting is a small matter to Mr. Tracy, whereas, if sent in their pots, the carriage, even by luggage train, would be considerable. When all was done, the Masdevallia house was left a howling desert, but we have taken advantage of its emptiness to wash the cinders of the stage, lime the walls, and pour a solution of hot lime over the pipes and rubble beneath them, in order to discomfort any insects that may be lurking there.

By the way, Mr. Tracy told me of a wonderful new sprayer called the Erinette, which works by means of compressed air and throws a spray of such fineness that, as he says, it will pay for its own cost—25s.—in a few months, inasmuch as, with better results than can be obtained with the old syringes, it only needs half the amount of X L, fir oil, or other insecticide, to any given area of glass. I have asked him to procure me one of them.

During his stay he told me some good stories of Orchids and Orchid-growers. Here is a specimen. A devotee of the cult asked a clergyman, who had a great local reputation as a gardener, to inspect his collection. The cleric arrived, and was led from house to house, but did not seem to be very much impressed by their various beauties. At length, when he had gone through them all, he was taken to a vinery, where there was a magnificent hang of Black Hambro grapes. At the sight of these his interest awoke.

Said he to the enthusiast, rubbing that part of him which Mr. Barrie has christened "Little Mary" the while, "Ah! my friend, your foreign plants are all very pretty, but these are the Orchids for me."

Said the enthusiast to him, "Sir, I asked you here to see my flowers because I was told that you were a great gardener. I find that I have been misinformed; you are only a great gut-gardener"; and he flung out of the place in a rage, leaving the parson to find his own way home.

This rather forcible little tale is, I believe, quite true.

On the Sunday after Mr. Tracy had left me I went to lunch with a friend, in order to spend an afternoon in going over his garden. Truly, that garden is a beautiful place, with its terraces, its wide and perfect lawns running up to the great Elizabethan mansion, its ancient, surrounding oaks, among which a double croquet ground has recently been made, its pond encircled by a bed of wild flowers, its herbaceous borders and various fenced-in closes—such a garden as I would have if I had bought a certain piece of land in the Transvaal, now known as the Rand, when I had the chance over five-and-twenty years ago.

The first things that we went to look at were some specimens of Tropæolum Speciosum, which had been planted in widely differing aspects by way of experiment. Everybody says that this beautiful creeper flourishes most in shade, but here, oddly enough, the plant that has done best is one that faces sou'-west in full sunlight. This has been covered with flower, and is planted twelve inches deep, other roots being set at eighteen and, I think, fifteen inches. My host, who is a real lover of flowers, and has a much better memory for their names than I can claim, and his head gardener, are both of opinion that T. Speciosum will rarely do in England unless it is set very deep. I mean to make an experiment of the theory, which seems to me reasonable, as, doubtless, these roots like to be kept cool.

Next we passed a wall on which a Wisteria was still in flower, and by it a Magnolia that has, however, done badly this season, and so across stately turf terraces to a lawn, on which grow various conifers, Cypresses and Thuyas, or Arbor-Vitæ, backed by great oaks. One of these trees, Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, is silvery in hue, and struck me as very beautiful. In a flower-bed close by a very compact yellow-flowered variety of Tagetes, or Marigold, was blooming. It makes an excellent bedding plant. Then we came to a large pond, which in spring is surrounded with bulbs growing in the grass. Here there is a marsh border set with wild flowers, such as the lovely purple Loosestrife and Hemp Agrimony (Eupatorium Cannabinum). It is wonderful how well these wild things look when thus arranged with careless art.

Beyond lay the croquet ground, made last year from the Park turf, upon which clover has been sown thickly. Its owner, who is a follower of the game, informs me that all croquet lawns ought to be grown with a large proportion of clover, that makes the balls run true, a fact with which I was previously unacquainted. I do know, however, that in the case of tennis grounds this is not desirable, as too much clover causes the players to slip. I noticed that many of the big Oaks round this lawn presented the appearance of having been struck by lightning, for new bark is forming over their white, seared wounds. It seems, however, that they owe these injuries, not to lightning, but to the effect of heat. In past years a timber-yard stood here, which was burnt down, with the result that the surrounding trees were severely scorched, but, fortunately, time will heal their hurts. Growing in beds in this part of the garden were two charming flowers, a dwarf Erigeron (I think it is called Mucronatus), with long, stalked flowers, that look like pink and white daisies, and an exceedingly graceful Leptosiphon.

Next we visited the five vineries, which are so managed that grapes were only lacking for the table during three weeks of last year. The sorts chiefly grown are Black Hambro, Lady Downe, and White Muscat, most of them now hung with splendid bunches. Here, when it is desired to send a vine to rest before its natural season, the leaves are remorselessly stripped off. On one of the vinery borders many of the best sorts of Sweet-peas were flourishing. These have been ingeniously planted in circular clumps placed close together, so that, while the varieties are kept quite separate, the general effect is that of a continuous hedge.

Near by we entered one of the most pleasing and retired little gardens that ever I saw. It is inclosed with walls and fences, and its small size in the midst of those great grounds adds to its charm. My host, with taste upon which I compliment him, has manufactured this pleasure spot out of a yard previously devoted to cucumber frames and débris. In it is a delightful garden-house, where he does his writing, &c., and in such surroundings even farm accounts should prove pleasant literature. The only drawback to it which I could see is that, in my experience, the English summer is seldom warm enough to make outdoor composition agreeable to the unulstered composer.

Here was an old stone wall, planted with Alpine creepers and other things, among them Arenaria Balearica, the charming creeping Sandwort, which clings to the wall like a garment, double yellow Welsh Poppies, the tiny Fuchsia Pumila and Campanula Turbinata, a sweet, white Harebell. Another wall has been built, hollow, and filled with earth, occasional bricks being omitted, and in the spaces thus formed are growing many flowers. This struck me as an excellent idea. A thing that was new to me also is a variety of Salvia called Bluebeard, which seems to be covered atop with rich blue blooms. These are not blooms, however, but leaves, its true flower being white and insignificant. It makes a good effect in a bed, as does a Begonia named Fairy Queen, which bears neat pink flowers amidst its reddish-bronze foliage.

Of the greenhouses I have left myself no space to speak, and the kitchen garden I had not time to visit. In the former, however, there were two things that can be recommended to the lovers of bulbous plants—Nerine Fothergilii, which is called the Glory of Table Mountain, and has a graceful rose-coloured flower ; and Zephyranthes Candida, which comes, I think, from Buenos Ayres, and has a bloom like that of a large white crocus.

Altogether I enjoyed my Sunday afternoon very much.

On Tuesday, September 1, Mason reappeared, bringing with him a really fine day. The wind, however, is rising and the forecast is bad, as usual. One of my daughters affects bees, and has been "doing them," a process that involves the donning of a costume almost as quaint as that of a lady-motorist, and includes a veil, half black and half white, a magpie combination of which I do not understand the advantage, unless, indeed it soothes the bees. As she announced that she intended taking many pounds of honey, I was an interested spectator of the process—from a distance—for ever since, as a child, some quite unprovoked bees stung my face, until it swelled to the size of a large pumpkin, I have had the greatest respect for their martial powers.

For quite a long while Mason seemed to bury his head in the bar-frame hive, while the young lady concerned puffed smoke upon him gently from a pair of bellows, and the bees went mad by thousands. At length the operators emerged, beating their garments and looking rather crest-fallen, and I asked where was the honey. It was then casually explained to me that there was none, as the bees, affected by the weather, and anticipating a shortage during the winter months, had, for their own private purposes, removed it all from the top supers to those below. It is clear to me that bees are even wiser than I thought.

How ferocious is the struggle for existence between water-plants! Yesterday I observed that one of the common white Lilies had thrust its great flat leaves over a delicate hybrid, literally extinguishing it. With my spud I pushed back these leaves, intertwining them, amongst others, under water in such fashion that it seemed impossible for them to escape. Yet this morning they are nearly all back again. So I have cut them off, and the poor hybrid, which looks quite pale, must be thankful. By the way, last week I had a rather amusing experience connected with this water-garden. A kind friend told me last year that she had a yellow Lily growing in her pond which she believed to be rare, and sent me a root, which was duly potted and plunged. This spring it flowered, and proved to be the ordinary yellow river Lily. Explanations ensued, from which it appeared that her gardener had made a mistake.

Next there arrived a box containing the true Lily. It was handed to Mason, and the following morning I asked if it had been planted. He replied, "No," and I inquired, "Why not?"

"Because, Sir," he answered with a smile, "I should like you to look at it first."

I did look. It was none other than my enemy with which I have been struggling all the summer—Villarsia Nymphæoides. I hope that if ever the truth becomes known, my friend will forgive me, but I instructed Mason to tie that Villarsia to a brick and throw it into the Stackyard horse-pond.

We have been engaged most of the day in the cleaning of the Cold orchid house of which I have spoken, in readiness for Mr. Tracy's Orchids, also in such things as rolling and preparing land for Strawberries.

The 2nd was a beautiful day, and, for a wonder, fairly warm. Mason has been taking Geranium cuttings, which ought really to have been done last month. After gathering we lay them for a day or so in the sun, and then for another couple of days in the potting house, as we find that if this is done they are less likely to damp, especially in a wet season, when they run to sappy wood. The hard, short-jointed growths of Geraniums strike the best.

Notwithstanding the weather, the garden looks really well now. Along the Wall border there are tufts of a very pretty variegated grass that was given to us, but, unfortunately, I do not know its name; and, as an edging, an effective Centaurea, with silvery, fern-shaped leaves, known as Candida or Argentea. This is supposed to be only half hardy, but a whole line of ours stood out all last winter, and they seem none the worse. Indeed, these over-year plants are very fine. Then there are a few good Cannas against the house and elsewhere, some of them bought roots, but for the most part reared by ourselves from seed. Their large many-coloured flowers are really effective, and contrast remarkably with those borne by the old sorts, of which I still have a few remaining.

The Castor-oil plant (Ricinus Communis), one which more than most others deserves the universal veneration of mankind, proclaims its noble and beneficial nature by the rich beauty of its foliage. (The domestic oil is extracted from the seeds, which I find are largely cultivated in Egypt, where I correct these proofs.) I think that the sort I grow is called Sanguineus, which is of a dark bronze hue and most effective, especially in the sunlight, but requires a good deal of room. It is a very suitable subject for planting in the middle of beds. The Begonias, Verbenas, and Lobelias are now all flowering well, as also is Leptosiphon, a neat and pretty thing with its many-coloured blooms, though better as an edging than in beds. Our plants of this have suffered a good deal this year from the sparrows, which found it well-adapted to the lining of their nests.

The long garden wall looks very gay on this bright morning in its dress of various Tropæolums, including the old Nasturtium and Canariensis, and several kinds of Roses. On the Vinery border sundry sorts of summer Chrysanthemums are coming into bloom. Among them are Blushing Bride, a pink-purple of the Pompon tribe; Flora, a bright yellow; L'Ami Condorcet, a small, compact lemon yellow; Miss Massey, of which the first bronze blooms have just opened; the white Early Queen; another charming white, name unknown, which I procured from a cottage garden; and last, but best, Harvest Home, a lovely rich bronze, remarkable for the strength of its growth and for the delicious healthy smell that is characteristic of the tribe.

On the Stable-border a good many things are now in flower, including the graceful and feathery Golden Rod; Marguerite Maxima, which I do not particularly admire; Ranunculus Acris, or Bachelor's Button, with its handsome yellow bloom: a vigorous bright yellow Helianthus; two varieties of the steel-blue Eryngiums; some Coreopsis; Mallows, pink and white, that are splendid for cutting, and light up well on the table; Penstemon; feathery Gypsophilas, with their panicles of bloom; and Saponarias, or Soapworts.

Thursday, the 3rd, was a red-letter day. To begin with, I do not think that it rained. I commenced it by arranging with the tradesmen as to the moving of the iron railings round the Lawn pond, so as to allow of the addition of the twenty-foot border. This will not be difficult, but it is astonishing what an amount of extra railing this trifling alteration will necessitate, apparently about fifty yards. At half-a-crown a yard or so, this mounts up, but, fortunately, such railings are a lasting possession. Before they are put down I propose to remove the turf, and then, in order to save labour, with one of the farm ploughs set as deep as possible, to turn up the soil in circular furrows, after which it must be dug and otherwise prepared. Thus, in a few hours a pair of strong horses will, it is hoped, do the rough work which it would take a man days to execute. I have also settled that men accustomed to such things are to come to-morrow to take down the railings on one side of the tennis-court, so that we may get on with the addition to the croquet ground at once. The sooner that job is done the better will the soil settle and the turf unite before winter sets in.

Calling at the station after lunch, I found to my surprise, that the Orchids had arrived from Mr. Tracy, and at once sent down for them. There were five plethoric-looking cases, which we began to open without delay, for what joy is there in this disappointing world like the joy of unpacking Orchids? I know that, neglecting my work, I wasted nearly all the afternoon at that entrancing task.

Impatiently you prise off the top of a box with a crowbar and remove the layer of hay beneath. There appear rows of pots laid upon their sides, and wrapped round, each of them, with paper. Within is the plant, neatly sticked for protection, the sticks being tied together with bast; bast is passed also between the growths and round the pot in such fashion that plant and compost cannot be shaken out of it. Here I may mention a little point for the benefit of other unpackers. Be careful not to cut the bast that holds the plant *in situ* until the protecting sticks have been withdrawn, since otherwise it is easy to drag out the whole contents of the pot with them.

In all there proved to be two hundred and ten plants—a hundred Odont. Crispum, ten Odontoglossums of other sorts, and a hundred Cyp. Insigne Montanum. Out of all of these only about six pots were broken—with such skill had they been protected.

Cyp. I. Montanum, it will be remembered, differs much from the common old Insigne, for among importations of it have occurred many of the new varieties of that splendid flower. The lot of which Mr. Tracy has sent me a portion were brought to this country about four years ago, and have not as yet bloomed here, although I see buds appearing upon a number of them. It is to this fact that they owe their interest, since one never knows but that among them may be some rarity. Thus, Mr. Tracy sold a hundred of them to a gentleman last year, and among those that flowered was one which fetched £30.

Certainly they are very diverse in their foliage, some having long, weak leaves, others short, stout leaves, some being dark-coloured, others light-coloured, while one is variegated with white. Let us hope that there will prove to be an equal diversity in their bloom. They are still small plants, few having more than four or five growths, as it is the practice of the growers to break up the original masses into many crowns. Thus, the number of plants is increased; moreover, in the end they do better. Given a single healthy growth of this vigorous Orchid, with ordinary care and knowledge of its requirements, its development into a large specimen is merely a question of time.

I have now several plants of Insigne that must measure two feet through, and are composed of more growths than I should care to try to count. There comes a limit, however, since beyond a certain size, say, at most, a twelve-inch pot, they get too heavy to handle in a greenhouse; moreover, the plant suffers from overcrowding at the centre. It was these considerations that caused me to break up into four the finest specimen of Insigne that I ever owned. One year this noble plant produced over fifty fine flowers, and a more splendid sight I never saw than it then presented.

In the garden to-day we have lifted some of our Improved Magnum Bonum Potatoes, trimmed the Geranium cuttings ready for setting, and made sowings of Common Garden and Ellam's Early Cabbages, also of Batavian Endive and Lettuce seeds.

On Friday, the 4th, we arranged the new Orchids in the Cool and Cold houses, the Odont. Crispums going, of course, into the latter. Really they look charming. Every plant has been stood upon an inverted pot or pan, to raise them off the coke and bring them nearer to the glass, as Orchids like to have air all round them. Moreover, they show much better thus. In the Cool house we have placed all the larger Cypripediums at the back of the stages, with the result that there are two sloping banks of green running down to the central path. I wonder what they will look like when in flower, say, in three months' time.

The hundred Odontoglossums Crispum, together with the score or so which I already possessed, just fill the front stage of the Cold house nicely, although many more could be accommodated. They are wonderfully healthy and well-grown, and now of a size to commence flowering forthwith.

We have reset several of my Barkerias in fresh Sphagnum, as notwithstanding the precautions that I took in the spring of soaking the moss in X L, I find that woodlice have crept into the baskets, and are beginning to work on the sweet young roots, which they like better than anything that grows. Also, this Sphagnum has gone somewhat rotten and sour. As Mr. Tracy said the other day, it is better to pay 7s. 6d. a sack for the best hand-picked Sphagnum, from which all the brown part has been cut off, leaving only the green tops, than 5s. or less for the cheap, carelessly-gathered stuff.

To-day we made another sowing of Turnip seed for winter use, and the railings on the croquet-court were taken down. When the new piece is added—that is, a breadth of nearly twenty yards, by a depth of six-and-thirty, it will make quite a nice expanse of turf. I have finally settled with Mason not to dig the ground of this extension, as at first I proposed to do—for two reasons. It would take a good deal of time and labour, and when done would not settle solid for a year or two. So we shall only move the top soil from the upper half to fill up the hollows in the lower part, drain thoroughly, hoe and level, and, where the ground is poor, face with a few inches of good garden mould. By this means we ought to get rid of most of the weed roots, and, with the help of a dressing of basic slag, provide a bed upon which the turf can flourish. Also, we shall allow a slight downward slope, that will be almost, if not quite, imperceptible to the eye, and serve the purpose of giving a fall to the water. When the old lawn was made this precaution was neglected, with the result that, notwithstanding all the drains, it is hard on this clay bottom to get rid of the moisture after heavy rain. Although it seemed fairly flat, we find that in places the new ground will require a good deal of levelling. To-night we were favoured with a sharp thunderstorm.

Saturday, the 5th, was cloudy and windy. We planted out some Spinach-beet for winter use, and went on with the training and tying of the pot Chrysanthemums; also we cleaned and rearranged the greenhouse, swept the drives, and raked the land for the new Strawberry-bed so as to secure a fine tilth.

The Erinette Spray has arrived. It is a neat little copper instrument, with a pump attached. This evening I went to experiment therewith in one of the Orchid houses. First, with a few strokes of the pump, air is either forced into, or expelled from, the cylinder—I regret to say I am not certain which. This done, the apparatus is stood in a bucket containing the X L, mixed with water in the proportion—if I remember right—of one pint to twenty, which is drawn into it by the action of the pump until the piston will work no more. Then the cylinder is held in the left hand by the handle provided, the tap at the end of the india-rubber tube turned, and the thing begins to work of itself until all the fluid, about three pints, is driven out in the form of a tiny spray. When a hissing sound informs the operator that its contents are exhausted, the instrument is recharged, but the introduction or exhaustion of the air need not be repeated, since, so far as my limited experience goes, sufficient force remains to continue to expel the spray.

Unfortunately, when I began I made the mistake of turning on the tap while the nozzle was pointed at my face, with the result that I received a charge of highly-concentrated nicotine in my eyes and hair. Amateurs should be careful to avoid this accident, as its effects are unpleasant. By the way, Mason assures me that the use of X L, especially when employed in washing plants, makes him bilious. I can well believe it, as it is a most potent compound.

These seem to be the result of the Erinette. The spray is much finer than that thrown by any syringe with which I am acquainted. Owing to the india-rubber tube, any part of the plant can be reached, including the under surfaces of the leaves. It is extremely easy and convenient to handle. Whereas it used to take a pint of unmixed X L to cover our four glasshouses with the syringe, with the Erinette it takes but half a pint. Now, as X L costs 10s. a gallon, this means that, instead of the weekly spraying involving an expenditure of about 1s. 3d., its present cost will be 7½d., at which rate, putting aside its other advantages, it will not take very long for the Erinette to pay its own price. I should add that the early morning, and not the evening, is the best time to spray, for the reason that slugs are dissipated creatures, which do not go to bed until long after it is light, and only get up in the dark. Therefore, by dressing the plants about seven o'clock in the morning, many of them meet their doom that otherwise would be securely sheltered among the crocks.

To-night we had a fine dish of St. Antoine de Padoue Strawberries. Notwithstanding the sunless weather, their flavour struck me as excellent, much better, indeed, than it was in July. Also, the Orchard house is still producing Peaches, and there are Wine-berries to gather, so as yet we do not lack dessert.

The Sweet-peas, which love wet, look very fine now, and there are many beautiful autumn Roses blooming in the beds and on the wall.

The morning of Sunday, the 6th, was dull, very still and autumnal. I sat by the Pond listening to the sound of the church bells floating through the quiet, heavy air. There is a peculiar hush in the remoter English countryside, especially on Sunday, when man and beast cease from their labour, not equalled, I think, by that of any other land. The silences may be deeper elsewhere, but they are different. Those of the Central American forests, or of the ice-cumbered northern sea in a dead calm, or the African fever bush at midday, or the untenanted High Veld, or the Egyptian desert, and the solemn Iceland wastes, to instance some that I have experienced, are all of them distinct from it, and, I may add, from one another. Each of them has its own quality, but not one in the least resembles the Sabbath silence of rural England in the autumn season. Perhaps the mellow, floating tones of the distant bells, telling of the past, hinting of the future, of things that have been and are not, of other things to be, but never here below, suggest this variation. Perhaps it is a matter of the mind rather than of the senses. I do not know. At least, that rich, reposeful calm, to my imagination, is an attribute of England and of no other clime.

The Lilies are still blooming freely in this Pond, but during the last day or two a curious and unpleasant scum has appeared upon the face of the water. I wonder why; after so much rain the thing seems strange. In the border the Nasturtiums and the Montbretias glow, splashes of rich colour, and the Tropæolums are bright about the trellis wire, but on this dull day the big dragon-flies which haunt the place have lost their steely hue.

Is there any purer or more gracious flower than that of the Japanese Anemone? I think not. I speak of the white variety, although the pink has its points. They are both blooming in plenty now, side by side, and near to them are the bright Chrysanthemums, gold and white and russet.

On the west face of the garden wall is a Pear, at which I have been looking. Its topmost growths barely reach the coping, and its stem is little thicker than my walking stick. Yet that pear was set in this spot twenty years and three months ago. Once it grew where the Cold orchid house now stands, but when this was built it was moved. The season was mid-June, and the leaf full upon it, but as I did not like to throw away the tree—a good sort—I tried the experiment of its summer transplantation. It lived and was healthy, but the shock was too much for it. For years and years it remained dwarfed, but now, at length, is bearing fruit and increasing in size, though but slowly. By the way, the wasps, beloved of the correspondent of *Gardening Illustrated*, are working havoc on such Pears as remain to us, except a basketful or two of Williams Bon Chrétien that have been gathered from the Stable-wall. Well, there are so few of them that it scarcely matters.

The triple line of Dahlias near to the Yew fence in the Old kitchen garden are growing bright with flowers. They are of all sorts and colours, Cactus and other kinds, but I will wait till more are out to describe them. Perhaps from association I think that I like the old English Dahlia, which looks as though it were manufactured by some celestial machinery, best of all this gaudy tribe, though the Cactus and the Single, doubtless, have more fascination for modern minds.

It poured in the afternoon and most of the night.

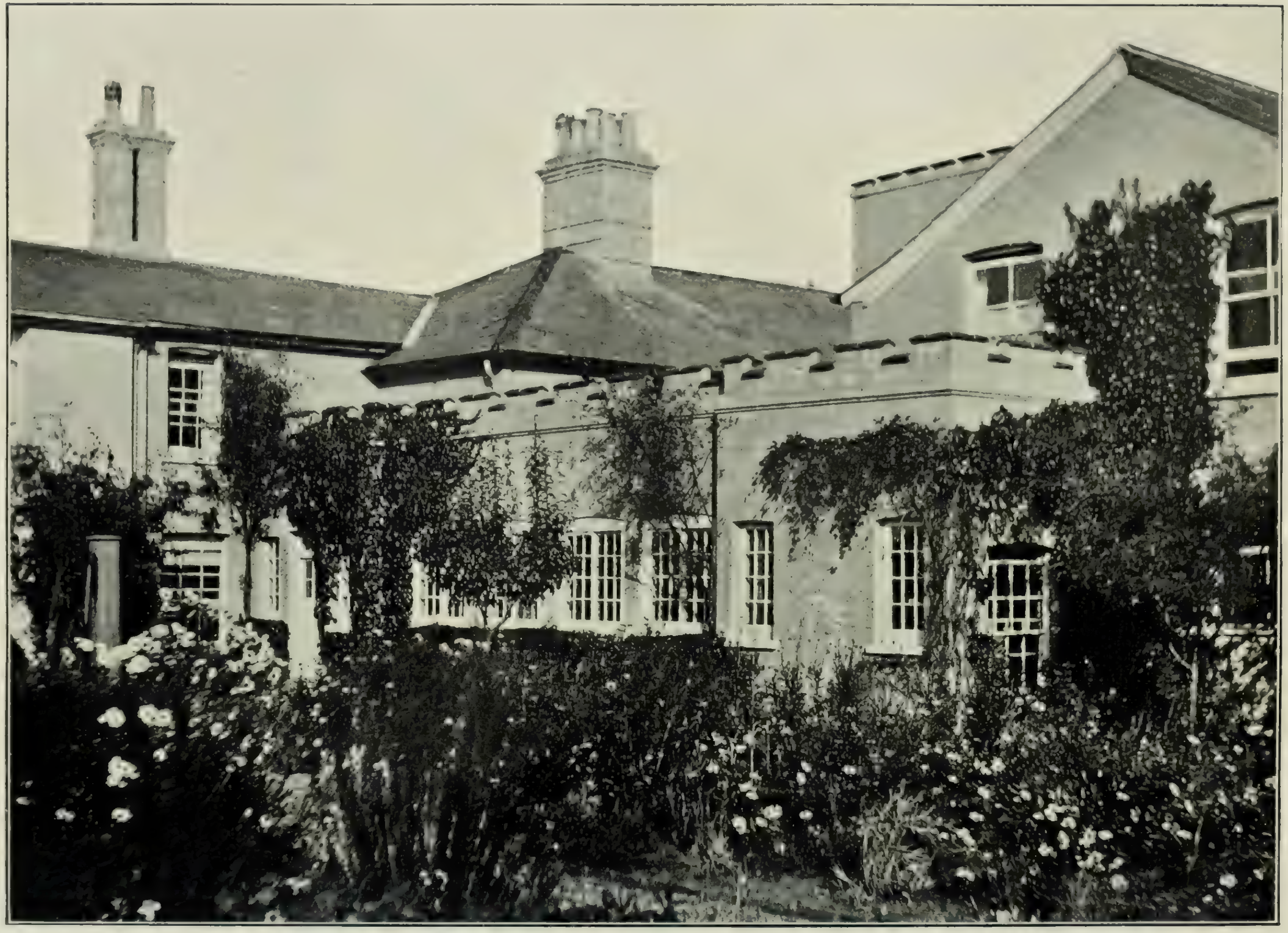
Monday, the 7th, proved beautiful after the rain, or so I thought, perhaps by contrast, as I took my morning walk round the garden. It was a somewhat melancholy perambulation, as we—that is, the garden and I—are about to be parted, more or less, for a month or six weeks, since to-day we migrate to the airy cliff of Kessingland. I lingered through the Orchid houses in farewell, though there is not much to see there. A single bloom of Cyp. Insigne Montanum has opened, the first, I hope, of several hundreds. It is a pale, undistinguished variety, with a rather weak stalk, and droops its nodding flower at me reproachfully, as though to ask how I have the heart to leave it unadmired. There is another Cypripedium, from which I part with more regret, that unknown seedling which I acquired I cannot remember how. It is a pure and beauteous thing, very large, with a spreading dorsal sepal, white, and marked with a broad purple line, and a fine slipper, suffused with a faint pink blush. Notwithstanding its size, too, a modest, virginal-looking bloom, without a trace of coarseness. What is its parentage, I wonder? Half Spicerianum, I should say, with a touch of Victoria Maria, and, from its vigour, something, perhaps, of an Insigne Montanum. But one more learned must decide. I will cut a flower (when it begins to fade) and send it to Mr. Tracy.

Cyp. Harrisianum Nigrum is out also. It is a handsome sort of which to have one or two plants, very black and shining, a bloom that would make an excellent table decoration at a festivity in the Infernal regions.

I rejoice to see that the raft of Phalænopsis, which I mentioned having purchased a few weeks ago, has more living plants on it than I thought, for tiny points of green leaves are appearing here and there amid bunches of dead-looking roots. With luck, I think I ought to secure about a score of living specimens. Well, the time is up, so I must take my bicycle and ride to Kessingland.

Before I do so, however, I should say that on this day we planted out our Strawberries. For autumn bearing we set a bed of St. Antoine de Padoue and the white Louis Gauthier, and close to it runners, that I have bought and begged, of Sir Joseph Paxton, Laxton Noble, Trafalgar, Laxton Leader, Veitch's Prolific, Lord Kitchener, and the good old British Queen. Also we cleaned some land for spring Cabbage and mowed the grass in the pleasure-garden.

September 8.—Here at Kessingland, notwithstanding the awful season, I find the vegetables doing wonderfully well. Never did I see such a bed of New Zealand Spinach; it has grown so thickly that not an inch of ground is visible between the stalks, and I am certain that we shall be unable to consume a tenth of it. The Potatoes, however, here, as elsewhere, are suffering from disease, owing to the continual wet, and the first lot lifted proved to be very small, having been cut by the spring frosts. To-day Bayfield is digging the Up-to-



CORNER OF FLOWER GARDEN, KESSINGLAND GRANGE

Dates, which are of a better size, though many of them are rotten. The White Elephants, also, are not so elephantine as I could wish. As usual, the Asparagus has thriven wonderfully; it is *par excellence* the vegetable of the place. In the flower-borders the clumps of large white Daisies look handsome, as does the Helianthus. The Carnations also are still blooming well. The weather is dull and wretched, with a little rain.

During the night of the 8th we had a heavy gale and rain, followed by a bright and windy morning. On the 10th there was a strong wind in the morning, with torrents of rain in the afternoon, and on the 11th a furious gale from the north-west, and more torrents. Such are samples of our weather this September! However, it has suited the croquet-lawn, which, it may be remembered, I sowed a few years ago; indeed, I do not know a more beautiful bit of turf. The grass is extraordinarily thick, so much so that, notwithstanding constant cutting, it plays slow, and there is hardly a weed to be seen.[1]

It is curious in gardening, as in other matters, how long we may search for the obvious without discovering it. As I generally let this place during the summer, I have for some time been anxious to provide a second tennis-court, if I could do so without going to much expense or increasing the labour bill. This is especially desirable, as the present court in front of the house runs east and west, which means that in the morning or afternoon the sun inconveniences the players.

Now, a brilliant idea has occurred to me. I find that by doing away with a flower-border, which, owing to its exposed position on the edge of the cliff, is practically worthless, and thereby adding in all about twenty feet to the width of the present tennis-court, it would become quite large enough for a full-sized croquet-lawn. This change will allow the present croquet-lawn to be used for tennis. Here there is ample room for two sets to be played at once; moreover, the courts can be made to lie north and south. Beyond the digging out of a stunted fence of mixed Hawthorn and Privet and some Euonymus bushes, most of which will, I think, come in for planting purposes on the face of the cliff, and the filling up of a small ditch, that by laying a three-inch pipe at the bottom of it can still be made available for drainage, the expense will be *nil.* The same may be said of the grass-cutting, since, when once the machine is out, fourteen feet extra make little difference.

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[1] This lawn has gone off a little in 1904, owing to the weakening of the clovers and the appearance of some twitch. I think, however, that a dressing of basic slag will put it to rights again.—H. R. H.

The experienced reader may ask: "How about your turf?" Well, at Kessingland, there is none worth having, since my new pastures are as yet too young and coarse to cut from. Therefore, the breadth will have to be sown as was the croquet-lawn. Since grass takes well upon such soil this will not really matter; indeed, I think that by midsummer next year it will be quite possible to use the ground for croquet, as the added strip at the edge of it will suffer but little wear. Therefore, the net gain of this improvement will be—two lawn-tennis courts of excellent situation and quality, instead of one very badly placed as at present, plus a full-sized croquet-lawn, for in this game no run-back is required. Net loss—a useless border, which absorbs some labour, a great consideration in a place where but one man is kept with a boy to help him in the summer months, for at best it only bears a few Marguerites and some common Iris, which the spring winds wither.

Friday's dreadful gale, which roared and screamed about the house all night, has done much damage throughout England, but nowhere, I imagine, more than at Lowestoft, where at spots yards of the Esplanade have been carried away. What is to be the end of the encroachment of the sea upon the south end of that town, I cannot guess, but to the ratepayers and property-owners there the sight must be melancholy indeed. As I write, by the aid of a pair of field-glasses looking from my study window, I can see the spray dashing up against its ruined cliffs four miles away, even at half-tide. Here, high as was the tide, it did not touch my outermost line of Marum grass.

Four or five years ago I planted some hundreds of Sea-buckthorn upon the face of my cliff, and for several seasons scarcely saw a sign of them, for when put in they were but tiny shrubs. Now, however, I rejoice to find that quite half of their number, if not more, have survived. Indeed, many of them are growing into good bushes, especially where, owing to one cause or another, they have found a little shelter from the bitter easterly winds. It is quite possible that within ten years or so this cliff will become a thicket of Sea-buckthorn, to the great improvement of its stability and appearance.

A large number of the Tamarisk cuttings that I have put in at different times have rooted also, especially at the foot of the cliff, where the draught is not so sharp, and they receive a little shelter from the Marum. As yet, however, they make but a small show, being still so young. The Marum itself looks very pretty at this season of the year with its hundreds of tall and graceful heads of seed waving to and fro in the wind. I note that those clumps which flourish near the foot of the cliff, where the sand is mixed with clay, bear many more seed-pods than do those that grow in the blown sand alone. It may be a sand-grass, but that it appreciates a better soil there is no doubt.

Monday, the 14th, was a most miserable day, even for this miserable year. Its characteristics were another gale, from the north-east this time, diversified by fierce showers of driving rain. Bayfield and the boy have been engaged in mowing the croquet-lawn and weeding the grass, for the land in the garden is too wet to stand on.

In the afternoon I walked along the beach to Lowestoft, for in bad weather one has this advantage at the seaside—the sand is always dry. My object was to see what had happened to certain gardens on the cliff at Pakefield, a village just outside Lowestoft. Presently I came to one of them—a melancholy sight indeed ! The gale of the 11th has taken a vast bite out of it. Over the edge of the cliff above project eight or ten feet of iron railing, swaying to and fro in a dismal fashion, its naked feet resting on air, and held up only by the iron bolts that connect the length.

The house above—a very good one, that must have cost £2000 or more to build—has been deserted. It was occupied by some friends of my own, but being warned by mysterious rumblings under their drawing-room floor, they retreated hurriedly a few months ago. Now that drawing-room is within about a score of feet of the edge of the crumbling cliff, over which ere long it will doubtless disappear. The wife of the late tenant told me that, not long before they left, while putting on her bonnet to go to church, she observed two men and a child standing on the edge of the cliff in front of their house. Presently they snatched up the child and incontinently fled. As she wondered why, the piece of ground upon which they had been standing vanished to the beach beneath. Now the uprooted plants from the garden are dotted about the face of this cliff or lying on the shore below.

I left this sad scene filled with sympathy for the unfortunate owners of that property, which, by the way, my friends the tenants nearly bought about two years ago.

On my way back I observed something projecting from the base of the cliff, in the dark clay substratum, newly exposed by the washing of the sea during the recent gale. On examination, I found that it was a tree of about a foot in diameter, but of what sort I cannot say, as the wood when I cut it was black as ebony. Still, no doubt, it was a tree, of which the end only is now visible, the rest being still buried in the cliff. I could not help wondering how many tens, or, more probably, hundreds of thousands of years, had gone by since it grew in Nature's garden, and, falling there, became thus entombed.

Just above it a layer of ordinary slate-coloured stones, rounded by the washing of water, was embedded in the cliff, telling us that after this forest-bed period the ocean beat over the spot where the tree grew. I picked out one of the pebbles and compared it with those that are to be found by thousands on the beach. There was no difference between them; it would have been impossible to tell them apart. Then I threw it into the edge of the surf, and instantly, after its million-year sleep, it began to live once more, rolling to and fro in the foam, and so, doubtless, will continue to roll until it fulfils another page in its destiny, and at last becomes sand again.

Above the pebble stratum was another of peaty substance, showing that, after the ocean had once more retreated, here was the bottom of a fresh-water lake. I think it is in this layer that most of the animal remains are found. At any rate, Dr. Crowfoot, of Beccles, a friend learned in such matters, who came to visit me, picked from it in an hour or so quite a number of the teeth and crumbling bones of rhinoceros, deer, and other primeval animals. Then above that are still more strata, each marking a change in the surface of this part of the earth—pure sands, boulder-clays, &c.; and projecting from them here and there my old friends—great solitary flints, many of them as large as a man could lift, all brought hither by glaciers in the ice-age.

I recommend any gardener who thinks himself a person of some importance to take a walk on the Kessingland shore and contemplate that cliff with a reflective mind; then he will learn to appreciate his proper place in the scheme of things. It is all recent—

quite, quite recent, or so I am told, and yet so ancient that when even its upper layers were deposited, man had not begun to wander on this part of the earth. If he had, traces of him, such as his instruments, or the bones of his body, would be found among those of the other beasts. Yet, before he made his memorable appearance, doubtless this Kessingland shore looked much as it does to-day, and the ocean came in and washed away the cliffs for a million years or so, and the ocean went out and the cliffs formed again for a million years or so, the only difference being that there were no houses on the land and no fishing-boats upon the main—in a great world small changes after all.

On this day the scene at nightfall was singularly lurid. The wind howled and tore over a mud-coloured, angry sea, upon the face of which lay a strange and smoky glow, reflected from the threatening sunset in the west, while from time to time, above the white-lined and tormented waste of waters, flashed out the beacon light of Lowestoft.

What a harvest evening!

Walking through the Marum on my way back to the house-steps I observed, as I have often done before, a multitude of large earth-worms lying dead upon the sand. I suppose the explanation is that these reptiles creep from the cliff in thousands in search of pastures new, until they find themselves in the sand, which works into their pores and chokes them. Indeed, I have found many of them dying thus, and it must be a lingering and most unpleasant end—another of Nature's tender mercies!

The weather has been so miserable and utterly unsuited to gardening work, the land proving for the most part too wet to stand upon, that during the remainder of the month there really is not much to record at Kessingland. Whenever we found a chance, as on the 18th, which was a fine morning, we went on lifting our Potatoes. On that day Bayfield showed me many of the tubers, with slugs feeding on them, deep down in the ground; indeed, these pests had often worked their way right to the heart of the bulb. I never remember noticing this before, nor does Bayfield, who thinks that it is owing to the perpetual wet having made the skins so soft that the slugs can bite their way through them.

When we are away from this place the vegetables are sold, but Bayfield says that, as it comes out of the season for visitors, there is but little market for Asparagus, however fine. Indeed, he was only offered sixpence per bundle of fifty large heads, and could not always get that. Asparagus, he explained, is not sufficiently strong tasted to be a popular vegetable. For Turnips, on the other hand, there is always a ready market. Globe Artichokes the local public will not buy at all, though, if not cut too large, I think them delicious. By the way, I notice in this garden what great land-thieves these Artichokes are. On either side of my line of them grow Onions and Rhubarb, and in each case, for a width of six feet or more, the Artichoke roots have practically ruined the crop, which beyond is good enough. Indeed, our Onions are far finer than any we have at Ditchingham this year. But it is a poor season for all vegetables and flowers. I never saw a worse display than was exhibited at the Lowestoft Agricultural Show on the 22nd.

On Thursday, the 24th, which was mild and warm, with a sea-mist so dense that the fog-horns were screaming all night on the steamers passing up and down the coast, I bicycled over to Ditchingham. The immediate object of my visit was to cross the yellow Cyp. Insigne Cobbianum with the large white seedling, which I have described, and I think that, if all goes well, the results should be very beautiful one day. I found both plants of Cobbianum in bloom and very pretty they looked. (Note: I cut off these flowers on Dec. 1.)

From the flower that had opened last, about three or four days before, I removed the pollinia—that is, the little pollen masses—from the shield with a wooden toothpick, and having first served the white hybrid in like fashion, though I do not think that this is necessary, applied them to the stigmatic surface which lies on the under side of the shield or plate, where they clung readily enough. Thus I did what the bee or other insects do when they enter the slipper of a Cypripedium. Out of this they cannot escape as they went in, the lips of the slipper being incurved. Therefore, they must force themselves through the opening between what is called the labellum and a stamen, and in so doing carry away one of the pollen masses which sticks to the insect's back. Should it visit another Cypripedium and repeat the process, in escaping from it the bee will come in contact with its stigmatic surface, and, by depositing the alien pollen there, effect fertilisation.

So far as my small experience goes, the hybridiser will succeed best who crosses his blooms before they have been out too long, and in the morning when the sun is on them. Also, the bearing plants should be exposed to the sun as much as possible during their period of pregnancy, which, in the case of Orchids, generally, I think, extends to about nine months. This, although it damages the plant, ripens the seed, presuming, of course, that there is any sun. Hitherto I have had great success in raising seed. Where I have failed is in growing the said seed, since, as I think I said, however thickly it came up, insects of one sort or another devoured the tiny plantlets.

The pollen that I removed from the white Cypripedium was placed upon a Cyp. Harrisianum Nigrum, but I rather doubt if it will take, as this Harrisianum has been in bloom for several weeks. (I find, two months later, that it did not.) I did not cross back on to C. Insig. Cobbianum, fearing lest I should weaken the plant, which is still small, since, in our climate at any rate, the breeding of Orchids means great deterioration to the seed-bearing parent. That this is not so in their native lands appears to be proved by the number of old seed-pods which are to be found upon quite healthy, imported plants.

In the Cool orchid house my specimen of Masdevallia Tovarensis has been rebasketed, the opportunity being taken to divide it into two nice plants. In the Intermediate house most of the Cattleyas that had not been attended to have been top-dressed or re-potted. The pots of Eucharis-lilies, which stand in the Warm orchid-house, have been placed in the Peach house to rest. In the Fig house the Tomatoes are almost finished, though the Figs themselves are still bearing well, and in the gardens and Orchard the few Pears that the weather has left to us have been tied up in muslin bags to protect them against birds and wasps.

The Dahlias by the Yew fence now make a fine show. I think the two best sorts are Maurice Walsh, a nice yellow Cactus, and Bertha Mauley, a pretty, iridescent variety. The extension to the tennis-court has not yet been begun, but certain old shrubs on its borders have been cleared away, only leaving two Yew trees, of about fifty years' growth, or perhaps more, for I cannot remember that they have varied greatly in size during my time. The increase of some trees is so slow, however, that when one lives with them year by year it is apt to escape notice.

Since I left home sundry things have been done. Thus, the Raspberries have been cleaned and trimmed, and the sappy, central growths in the standard Apples removed to let light and air into the centre of the trees. We have put in cuttings of Logan-berries, in the hope that they will strike, earthed up the Celery, picked over the Potatoes that proved to be much diseased, done some weeding to the turf, taken Begonia cuttings, pricked out seedling Delphiniums, and re-potted Freesias. Also gravel walks have been broken up and rolled, and more Violets set in frames. A few Bench Carnations grown from German seed, which are showing for flower, have been set in pots and moved into the Fig house, and some of the Chrysanthemums placed under glass.

The Celtic King and other Auriculas, which I ordered from Hobbies at the Norwich Show in the Spring, have been duly received, and our own lot re-potted. Lastly, land has been cleared of Peas and Beans, Lettuce planted out, manure laid up to decay for the garden, and more sowings made of Turnip and Spinach.

In the Lawn pond the hybrid Water-lilies are still blooming well, though the Whites are now over, and on its border, the Nasturtiums and Montbretias continue to look gay. For the rest, Autumn has laid its red hand upon the place, turning the Ampelopsis leaves to a brilliant scarlet hue, and those of the trees from green to russet-brown.

On Monday, the 28th, we planted at Kessingland about two hundred Strawberries of different varieties, runners taken from plants at Ditchingham, and set out there for the last month or two in order to gather strength. They make a nice bed. Bayfield has been taking advantage of a short spell of comparatively dry weather to dig up as much of the Kitchen garden as he can. He says it is impossible to leave this land till the Spring, since it goes down so tightly during the winter, and to attempt to move it when wet does it more harm than good.

This afternoon I walked about two miles up the coast in the company of my little daughter to secure some roots of the common Sea-holly (Eryngium Maritimum), which I want to plant among my Marum, since, oddly enough, none seems to grow on this part of the Kessingland beach. Here, towards Benacre, we found it in great plenty. To get it up, however, was no easy matter. The child's iron spade, which we had brought with us, broke at once, so we fell back upon the trowel and my spud. But even with these instruments it proved quite impossible to reach the ends of the roots, which go down I know not how far in the sand. Therefore, we cut them off at a depth of about six or eight inches, and, trimming away the rusty tops, tied them in bundles with string. Soon we had our baskets full, and, returning, set the plants among the Marum in front of the house in holes prepared with my spud. Whether or not they will grow I am unable to say, though I believe the safest way to raise Eryngiums is from seed. However, we have done our best, and so hardy a plant ought to strike, especially as it seems to propagate itself freely enough among the Benacre Bents, and in pure sand, without any admixture of the clay which it is said to love.

Thus September came to an end. It has been a wretched month, especially in the harvest field; but that is too tragic a matter to speak of here.

OCTOBER

TOWARDS the end of last month I went to stay for a day or two with a friend in Cambridgeshire. In his garden were some very pretty things, especially a bed of Gladioli, that came originally from Burrell and Sons, of Cambridge, and bore some of the largest blooms I ever saw. My host told me that once they were of many colours, but now, after some years, they have all gone to pink and mauve. In this garden was a border that I thought singularly charming. In front ran a gravel path, and at the back a sloping bank, on which grew Ivy and Periwinkle mixed, that climbed up to the edge of the green lawn above. The bed itself was filled with white Japanese Anemones, just then in full bloom. The effect of their hundreds of nodding heads against the background of the Ivy was pleasing indeed.

Here Tropæolum Speciosum is grown on a north aspect, and was a mass of bloom. Perhaps it is the chalk subsoil that makes it do so well.

A very pretty creeper for a house is a variety of Vitis called Flexuosa which I saw here, its autumn leaves being of a bright scarlet. Another fine, broad-leaved creeper was one of the Aristolochias, known as Dutchman's Pipe. The history of this particular plant speaks well for its vital powers. A few years ago my host's house, against which it stands, was burnt to the ground, but, to the surprise of everyone, two springs later the Dutchman's Pipe reappeared, and now is a noble specimen. In a tub hard by stood a large Chamærops Palm, grown to its present size in seven years from seed brought by my friend from the south of France, where he has a garden. The only shelter it receives is that of a cowshed in winter.

Talking of shelter, I saw here a new system of protecting espalier fruit-trees from frost. It consisted of an iron framework, covered with galvanised netting, to which the branches are tied, and, above, a zinc ridge-cap. This, however, must have been very expensive to erect, nor did I consider that the trees beneath looked particularly healthy. To begin with, it keeps off sun, as well as frost and wet; also, I should think that so much zinc would set up galvanic action.

At this house I made my first acquaintance with an Apple, which I thought delicious, and, indeed, at first imagined to be one of the finest Canadian sorts. It is named James Grieve, and came from Messrs. George Bunyard & Co., who say of it in their catalogue that it is " one of the best Apples recently introduced, and may be styled an early Cox's Orange." They state also that it is of fine flavour and appearance, comes from Scotland, succeeds where Cox's is tender, and is a remarkably good bearer. The specimens that I ate off some Pyramids, which have done well on this chalk soil, were large in size, of an orange-green colour, with a red flush, and a sharpish flavour of Pippin and Pine-apple. I recommend my readers to try this Apple, as I mean to do myself.

Here at Kessingland even the hardy Sea-Buckthorns which are planted on the face of the cliff, have been sadly scorched by the spray brought up in the recent gales, whilst a few Privets and other things are turned quite black. It is this driving spray, more than the bitter winds, which makes it almost impossible to grow trees here at the ocean's edge. At the far end of my long Kitchen garden stand a score or two of Pyramid Apples. These, although they bloom very well, Bayfield and I have determined to dig up and give away in the village, since, year by year, the salt mists, driven before some summer tempest, wither all their young shoots and cause them to decay. The same thing happens to the line of hardy Black-Poplar bushes, for they can scarcely be called trees, that edge the road. Even under the shelter of the house I have seen them in July turn as black as though their foliage had been exposed to a dozen degrees of frost.

I am now confirmed in my opinion that only two shrubs will really do here—Sea-Buckthorn and Privet excepted, which look as though they meant to thrive—namely, Tamarisk and Euonymus, to which in future I shall confine myself. As I believe I have mentioned, Gorse itself, that is supposed to be so hardy, can scarcely withstand the joint influences of spray and wind. Of the thousands that I sowed upon the cliff, although they came up well as seedlings, only four now remain, though it is true that these look like making good bushes. One wonders how it comes about that they should have survived when all their companions have perished. Probably here we see evolution at work, some innate and exceptional hardiness having enabled them to live where their brethren died, and, perhaps, in due course, to produce children ably to defy salt and the action of continual gales.

These gales, by the way, are productive of surprises. Thus, the other day, an unusual sight on this rockless shore, I found the whole beach covered with plants of beautiful pink seaweed, some of which I propose to collect and use as manure on the Asparagus beds. There are few better stimulants than sea-weed, as I have seen in the Hebrides, where it is applied as a dressing to the fields. Also, among the Marums lay scores of dead butterflies, all of them of one variety — the Painted Lady. I suppose that a vast migrating flight of these insects were caught by the tempest and whirled, broken-winged and dying, against the cliff.

Several pairs of house-martins have nested here beneath an eave, with a northern aspect, but which receives some shelter from a wing of the house, and have been busily engaged in attempting to rear their young. It is pitiful to see them, when the wind is too strong for them to attempt to fly in the open, hawking under the shelter of the cliff for such few insects as are left alive, and then, taking advantage of a lull, dash up to feed their famished young. One of these fledglings fell out of the nest, and had the sense to crawl under the verandah, where it passed the night. Next morning the poor little thing was so hungry that it waddled after me, pecking at my finger. The sight was so painful that I sent for a ladder, and with some difficulty it was restored to the nest. I only trust that it may survive.

One afternoon, when it happened to be fine and still, I went to see the church at Sotterly, some miles away, which is situated in the middle of a park, with no house near it except the Hall. The great Oaks and other trees in this park have been a good deal knocked about by the gales, but look very handsome in their autumn dress. One beautiful sight I saw, a natural bed of Scabious—Devil's Bit I think it is called—backed by Bracken Ferns and bushes, and beyond them with great Oaks. It grew literally in blue masses, on which played and settled dozens of the brilliant Red Admiral butterflies. Taken together, the colour effect was one of the prettiest that I remembered in England—blue-mauves and green go wonderfully well together when Nature arranges them and sets them off with golden Bracken.

Charming also was the effect of the little lonely church embowered in its trees, and lovely the light glistening on the tall Hollies amidst whose green the red berries already show, and on the browning Sweet Chestnuts with their masses of spiny fruit. Bathed in a gentle, radiant flood, the ancient graveyard, set with mossy stones and tombs, among which here and there grows a Cypress or a Golden Yew, planted in memory of those departed, was a picture of perfect peace, beneath that still, cloud-mottled sky. Surely here, if anywhere, the dead should sleep sound.

A friend has been staying with me who is engaged in restoring a beautiful, Elizabethan house in Hertfordshire, which was built, I believe, or, at any rate, owned, by the Essex family. I mention it because in this house hangs a drawing of the garden made in 1648 by Arthur, Lord Capell, and his wife, Elizabeth Morrison. Also there is extant a picture of the family group of this Lord Capell, his wife, and children, having the garden as a background. Both the drawing and the picture are most interesting, as they show what kind of pleasure grounds were in fashion among the wealthy in the time of Charles I.

The garden was of turf and gravel only, there being no flowers except some in pots, stood upon pedestals along the balustrade of the terrace. It was surrounded by a wall, and had hip-roofed summer-houses at the corners whereof the foundations have been recently discovered. Within the square ran a path, at the corners of which stood four statues, apparently of Cupids, and within this, again, were two circular paths, cut by a broad, central walk, that extended from the terrace steps to a kind of gatehouse in the opposing wall. Also there were other cross paths running to four fountains, where, on the plan, the water is represented as spouting from vases, though how it was laid on remains a mystery.

The whole effect of it stretching down to the park must have been very formal but very quaint. I have been trying to persuade my friend to restore this garden exactly as it was two hundred and fifty years ago, which could easily be done with the help of the picture, plan, and existing foundations; but, unfortunately, although the terrace wall still remains, part of its site is now occupied by a croquet-lawn. Were such a restoration convenient, doubtless, could they know of it, it would be grateful to the old makers of this pleasaunce, wherein they and their little ones used to wander long and long ago.

I have been reading with the greatest interest the third report from the Woburn Experimental Fruit Farm, by the Duke of Bedford and Spencer U. Pickering, Esq., which is devoted to the effect of grass on fruit trees. It contains an account of the elaborate experiments made at the fruit farm in order to prove whether or no grass grown about their roots is or is not detrimental to such trees. A report so valuable should be read by every one interested in the subject, but, for the benefit of some who may have neglected to do so, I venture to quote a few lines from it. Say the Authors :—

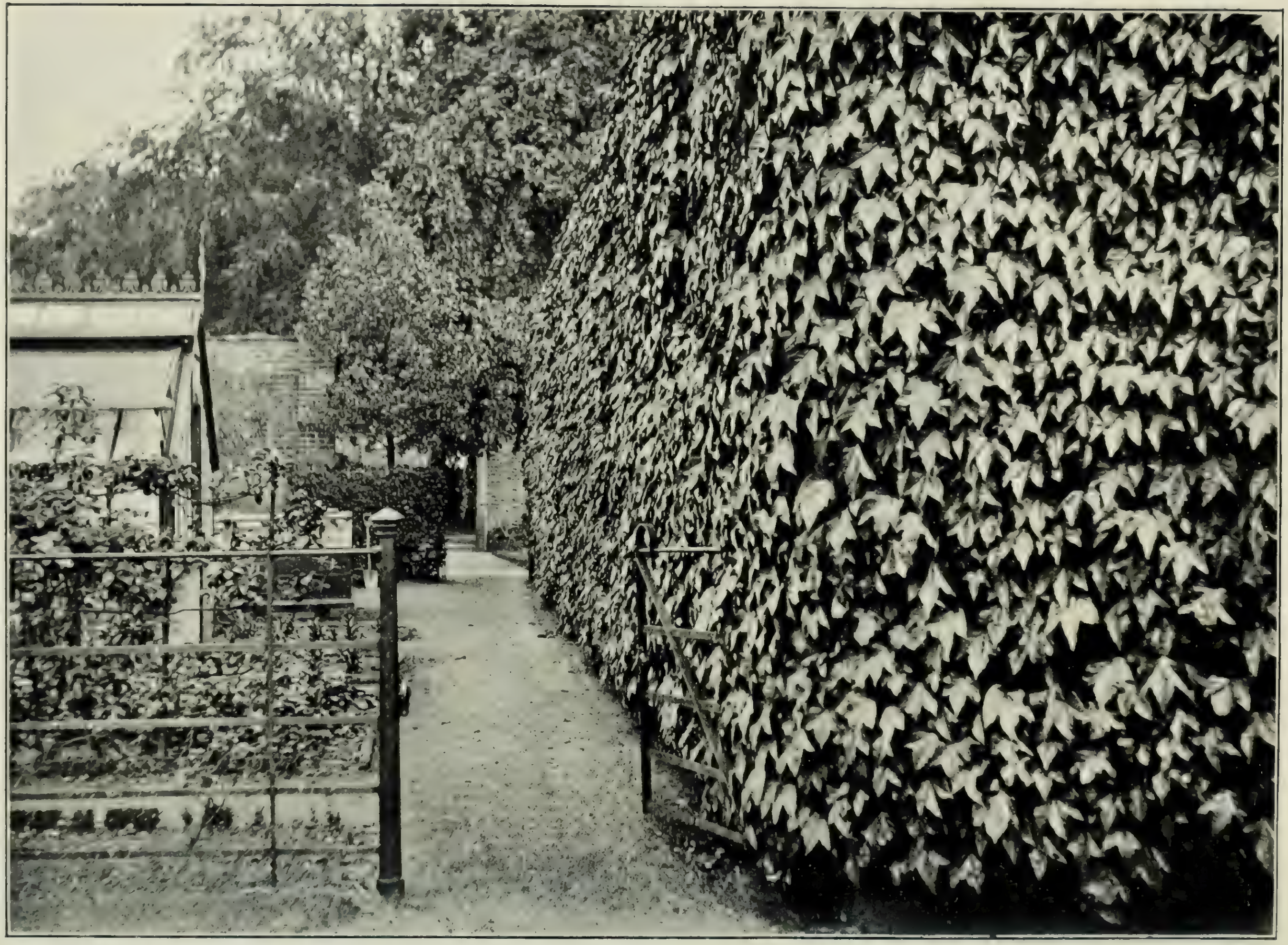
"As to the general effect produced by grass on young Apple trees, the results of the last few years have brought forward nothing which can in any way modify our previous conclusions as to the intensely deleterious nature of its effect, and we can only repeat that no ordinary form of ill-treatment — including even the combination of bad planting, growth of weeds, and total neglect—is so harmful to the trees as growing grass round them."

Again they say "the evidence that we shall bring forward will, we believe, be sufficient to dispose of the view that the grass-effect is due to an interference of either the food-supply, the water-supply, or the air-supply of the tree, and that it must, in all probability, be attributed to the action of some product, direct or indirect, of grass-growth, which exercises an actively poisonous effect on the roots of the tree."

These deductions, however, are modified in the following passage: "In conclusion, we must repeat the warning which we have more than once given to our readers—not to make our conclusions more comprehensive than we would make them ourselves. We have continually to bear in mind that the results of experiments, made in one particular soil, may be very different from those of experiments in other soils; similarly, also, the different varieties of Apples may behave very differently."

Although they are scarcely worth quoting in the same breath, I may add that the results of my own experience and observation are identical with those arrived at by the conductors of the Woburn Fruit Farm. I believe grass grown round their roots to be practically destructive of many young Apples on the Free and Crab stocks, and of those of all ages when grown in the Pyramid or Bush form on whatever stock they may be grafted. In my work, "Rural England," any who are curious on the subject, if they will take the trouble to refer to the index, may find several instances of this fact collected by myself during my travels. So convinced did I become of it, indeed, that in my own Orchard I have trenched in all the grass, with the result that already the trees have considerably improved. Doubtless, however, in well-established orchards on certain soils, especially if these be deep and cool, old Apple trees do bear fairly well with grass about them, and I have even known growers to lay down grass in plantations of a certain age. I attribute this to the roots having reached beyond its evil influence, whatever that exact influence may be, although I think that even such mature trees would bear better if the grass were gone. Cherries, however, seem to object to its presence less than Apples; at least, the finest Cherry-orchard that I ever saw—it grows in Worcestershire—was in grass.

I see that Messrs. Merryweather, the well-known Nurserymen, carry the thing so far as to advise in their catalogue that never, under any circumstances, should garden produce be grown under orchard trees. The maxim may be sound; I have no doubt that it is, but



AMPELOPSIS VEITCHII ON GARDEN WALL

in many instances it must remain somewhat of a counsel of perfection. On the other hand also, it should be remembered that where vegetables are grown the soil of the orchard, which otherwise would most probably be neglected, is manured and cultivated; further, that the crops do not stand upon it all the year round. Lastly, at Evesham, and in other districts where they understand such things, it is a very common practice to grow vegetables, especially the winter sorts, in orchards. Were the custom so universally deleterious, would these hard-headed gardeners, who raise fruit for a living, continue its practice?

By the way, how vast is the flood of horticultural catalogues, many of them got up at great expense, as I, who understand something about such matters, can certify. Even to a humble person like myself the post brings them by dozens; indeed, frequently I receive two or more copies of the same catalogue, which suggests that the addressing department is not always as carefully supervised as it might be. Well, I suppose that the system pays; also that to bear the strain of such expense the profits of the Nurserymen must be handsome.

On October 1st I came over to Ditchingham for a day or two. Never during the whole year has the garden looked more beautiful than it does now in the glory of its autumn ruin. Especially splendid is the blaze of scarlet Ampelopsis leaves upon the walls, although, unfortunately, it does not last long, since when once they reach this stage the first wind tears them off, and then for months there is nakedness. For this reason it is that I prefer Ivy, which preserves its modest garb of green throughout the year. The outdoor Chrysanthemums also are now very fine, but I think that we have made the mistake of planting them too closely, with the result that in some places the winds and rains have tangled them to a heap. I notice that these Chrysanthemums do better and last longer if they are set at a distance from each other. The Japanese Anemones and Dahlias remain a good show, and the Salvias Splendens, that gorgeous flower, are blazing both on the beds and potted in the greenhouse.

The turf on the croquet ground extension is now in process of being dug up. First, it is cut into perfectly accurate squares with the help of a line—this is necessary, or it could not be relaid without hacking it about—and then raised with a lifting knife. Being very old, it is exceedingly tough, which makes the sods hard to roll up. For the same reason two men have to do the cutting, one pushing at the knife, and the other pulling by means of a cord made fast to its shaft just above the blade. However, most of it is off now, and built into neat walls round the edge of the lawn. Underneath the sods lie hundreds and hundreds of worms, most of them cut in two by the knife, poor things, but I cannot distinguish many weed roots.

We are making our preparations for levelling the bed of the new court by means of pegs. Where the ground is low these pegs are fixed projecting above it to the required height, and where it is high trenches have been cut in it and the pegs sunk in them to the right depth. These will show us presently what amount of soil has to be added or taken away. The little fence that borders the ditch at the foot of the ground has been stubbed up together with a few small and useless trees, and the ditch itself widened. As the soil is stiff clay we have found it necessary to cut steps in it up the sides of the ditch to prevent the good garden mould which we are putting on it from slipping to its foot.

These sides I propose to clothe in due course with Saxifrages and other suitable things, whilst the bottom of the ditch will be made into a little water-garden, as the stream flowing down it from the field drain can never be strong enough to wash away the plants, although it may occasionally submerge them. The alternative would have been to lay ten-inch drain pipes to take the water and fill the whole thing in, which, having the soil handy, of course we could have done. This is how the rest of the ditch that borders the court was treated in past years, but, on the whole, we thought that it would be prettier if dealt with in the fashion that I have described.

I think that somewhere in this book I have mentioned the curious sunk fosse which runs through the garden not far from the bottom of the croquet-lawn, whereof no one now can tell the origin or purpose. When first I knew this place, after heavy rains water frequently stood in it to the depth of a foot; indeed, I have seen it nearly full from side to side. Many years ago, however, I drained it. Now I think that this drain must be blocked with clay and roots from the bordering shrubs and trees. At any rate, the water is beginning to stand again, especially in this wet year, so that the draining will have to be redone with larger pipes.

Meanwhile, I propose to take advantage of the spare soil which we shall have at hand to half fill up that part of the fosse which is opposite to the croquet-lawn. This will make the approach to the courts easier, especially for elderly people, who do not care to climb up and down steepish banks, and with the help of the new drain, of course, keep the bottom quite dry. We should have enough stuff available to fill this part of it altogether, but as it is an ancient feature of the place and pretty in its way, with the Oaks and Beeches standing about it, I do not think that would be desirable.

After so many gales, which at wind-swept Kessingland force themselves upon our notice as they scream and roar about the house, the stillness of this October day at Ditchingham strikes me as quite extraordinary. No leaf stirs upon the trees, and so heavy is the silence that the hum of every passing insect and the autumn twitterings even of distant birds catch and compel the attention. The grass is wringing wet, and, where at all long, literally bent down by the weight of dew, and were it not for the dense haze the day would be hotter than most that we have been favoured with this summer. As it is, the atmosphere is what in Norfolk we call "faint" and very oppressive for shooting, the amusement upon which I was engaged. That is, it was oppressive until the early afternoon, when rain set in —a perfect tropical torrent, falling straight from heaven to earth, which soon cooled us most satisfactorily, and even filled my boots with water. This rain continued at intervals throughout the night. Truly, it is an extraordinary year!

In the garden the lines of St. Antoine de Padoue Strawberries are still a mass of bloom. Indeed, at Kessingland, we have been having dishes of them sent from here, which in any ordinary autumn would, I think, have been very good to eat. As it is, the recent deluges have washed most of the flavour out of them. Slugs and snails are the only creatures that enjoy such weather, and they have eaten off nearly all the Lettuces planted between the young Strawberries.

The Michaelmas Daisies are now very effective in the borders. Indeed, one plant of the large white sort, when looked at from a distance, produces quite a brilliant and starry effect.

The alterations to the courts have taken up most of our time, but in the intervals the ordinary gardening work has been going on, such as the cleaning of the gravel walks and drives, the cutting of grass, and the trimming of edges. Also we have put out some spring Cabbages and stowed away our winter stock of coke. This is a job that involves a good deal of labour, as when the farm waggons arrive, in which it is carted from Bungay, they cannot be kept standing. So all available hands have to help to empty them. For many years I used to burn anthracite, but gave it up when it became so dear owing to the coal strike a while ago. Now I use coke only, as although it gives out rather less heat, the temperature is, I find, more regular, and it does not produce the same dry, burning feel in the houses. Those who require much warmth, however, in my opinion, will do best to use anthracite, a more powerful calorific. I have also tried steam coal, but abandoned it on account of the volumes of smoke that it emits, which in certain winds or in dull and frosty weather made the garden like a factory yard.

This will be a short month's diary, for two reasons —the awful nature of the weather, and the fact that at Ditchingham we have been engaged upon the croquet-lawn, to the practical exclusion of all other work except that which was absolutely necessary. About the middle of the month I again bicycled thither from Kessingland, over greasy roads strewn with hedge clippings. Near Beccles I passed some men engaged in lifting a crop of diseased potatoes, and heard one of them say to the others that they were lucky to have any left at all, which was more than some folks had—an instructive commentary on the nature of the season.

At home I found the trees dreadfully broken about by the latest of the series of gales, which caught them while they were still in leaf, and therefore offered much resistance to its strength. A huge bough has been torn off the great drive Elm and others from neighbouring Oaks. What is worse is that a beautiful round-topped Oak of about fifty years' growth, which stands conspicuous and solitary on the Back-lawn, has had one side of it completely smashed in. This means that its appearance is ruined for the next two or three decades.

The croquet-lawn I found progressing but slowly in all this wet. As Mason says, it is a "most melancholy year." In the Cool orchid house the Cypripediums were beginning to come out nicely, and in the Intermediate house there was a good show of the beautiful little Lælia Pumila, but nothing else remarkable.

At Kessingland we have experienced hurricane upon hurricane and torrent upon torrent. Thus, in my diary I find such entries as these:—

"9th: Dull. South-west gale working round to north.

"10th: Very high tide, up to Marum. 10th to 14th: Vile weather. Gales and deluges of rain. All the country flooded. Nothing to record. Swallows and martens gone. 14th to 25th: Wet, wind, and misery. To-day (Monday) worse than usual, with a sou'-west gale and driving rain. So far we have not had one calm autumn day. The large white Daisies are, however, still flourishing in the garden, and look very well upon the table when set off with Privet sprays. Also, up to the present, the daily Carnation from the garden has not been lacking for my buttonhole. 25th to 28th: Absolutely *awful* weather, with rain and gales from south and sou'-west. On the 26th Bayfield dug up the Narcissus bulbs from the border, which is to be sown as an addition to the lawn. We found them in a sop of almost fluid mud, yet they had healthy shoots, four inches long. Handling them very carefully, so as not to break these shoots, we moved them to the long border, and there reset them in clumps, surrounding each clump with some dry sand."

And so forth.

I remember years ago seeing a book of travels noticed in the *Saturday Review* in these words and no others: "This work is a record of mud, mosquitoes, and misery." I am inclined to sum up October, 1903, in similar style: "This month is a record (in another sense) for wind, wet, and wretchedness."

At the end of it again I visited Ditchingham, and found the croquet ground almost finished. Thankful am I that it is so, since without extra help, for it has all been done by our own staff, the labour has proved great, far heavier than I anticipated. Any one looking at the inequalities of surface, that appeared so trifling before it was begun, I am sure would never have guessed the amount of soil that in the end it proved necessary to move. I should think that forty or fifty loads of cold subsoil have been carted away to be spread upon the Back-lawn, and other twenty or thirty used to raise the bottom of the sunk fosse. Scores of loads, also, have been moved from one part of the ground to others where it lay hollow. Indeed had it not been for the help of a little tumbril and an old pony that I have, I do not think that we could have completed the business under another fortnight, especially as all the good, top soil had to be carefully laid aside for re-use, it being the dead under-clay that we carted away.

We have arranged the drains in a herring-bone fashion, one main, with branches running out at intervals on either side, and set these very thick, so that here at least the water should not stand. Also, as we agreed, a slight surface slope has been given towards the pond, but I think it quite possible, the turf having been laid upon mud rather than soil, and under the most disadvantageous conditions of weather, that there will be settlements in places.

All our great heap of garden soil, rotted down from leaves and rubbish, has been used up to make a nice layer of stuff for the sods to lie on, and, though I grudge it, doubtless the grass will benefit. The turf, except at its edges, where it got some air, looks very yellow after being rolled up so long, but will, I hope, recover. In addition to what was suitable on the spot, we have been obliged to cart many loads cut from round the Lawn pond, where it is very good. As the border here is going to be enlarged this will, fortunately, prove no disfigurement; indeed, in this way the two improvements have worked in very well together. Much turf has also been consumed in relaying the sunk fosse on the top of the added soil. As I anticipated, my old drain here has proved to be quite full of roots and hard clay, and, in fact, must have been practically useless for some years. Now all that remains to do to this court is to give it a dressing of basic slag and a coat of about eight loads of road-scrapings, the latter to comfort the grass and fill in the cracks between the sods. Glad enough shall I be to see the last of the undertaking, for it has proved very onerous.

There is no doubt, however, that the alterations will be of great advantage, as the lawn is now sixty yards wide from rail to rail, which means that it can accommodate two full-sized croquet grounds or three, or, perhaps, at a squeeze, four lawn-tennis courts. Also, whereas before it was very obviously a piece taken in from a field, now that the railings have been moved out of sight, it looks like, and indeed, has become, an integral part of the garden. Further, I reflect with some pleasure that this addition has, in fact, cost me nothing beyond the price of the drain-pipes and a few yards of railing. When the rest of the lawn was made about fifteen years ago, I remember being dismayed to find that the total bill for it amounted to over £60.

As there has been no time for tidying up, which, indeed, at this season of the year, with a gale every other night, it would be practically useless to attempt, the place looks somewhat melancholy. Everywhere lie scattered boughs torn from the trees, to say nothing of the fallen leaves that pursue each other in an endless dance and pile themselves in hollows and in corners. Some gardeners make a practice of sweeping up all the leaves as fast as they come down, and in great establishments, where labour is no consideration, doubtless this is desirable. In those run on a smaller scale, however, I think that the best plan is to let them be and make a periodical clearance once a fortnight. For my part, I do not mind the look of dead foliage on the grass, since, at least, its tint is warm and it does no harm there; whereas, if it must all be gathered up at once, other and more pressing work has to be neglected. But this is a matter upon which opinions vary.

We are in trouble about a tree. Near the front gate, where the House-farm backs on to the drive, stand three great Elms, one of which, were it to fall in a certain direction, might possibly work destruction to the roof of the farm and to any one beneath it. I remember that in the great March gale of 1897 all the inhabitants of the farm took refuge in a cow-house for fear of this tree. After that I gave instructions that it should be pollarded, but this has never been done. Now, my bailiff's wife informs me that she has been sitting up for whole nights, being terrified lest it should elect to blow over upon the house, which, it may be added, it has shown no signs of doing.

I asked why her husband had not caused it to be dealt with as I directed, and she informed me that no one could be found who was willing to undertake the job, which for various reasons is somewhat difficult. So what is to happen I do not know, since in this tempestuous clime she may find her night vigils frequent and wearisome. The fact is that, like every other class of expert rural labourers, that of skilled woodmen is now much depleted. Formerly in every village there were two or three men who were not afraid to deal with any tree. To-day they have died out or grown old, and their place is but partially filled by travelling gangs, who are only available for some big fell.

The outdoor Chrysanthemums on the Old Vinery border are now completely beaten down by the wind and rain, a mere brown mass of tangled stems and flowers, which will be well out of the way as soon as it is safe to cut them off. Notwithstanding their careful sticking, the Dahlias are in little better case.

Even in the Orchid houses the effects of this direful season are very visible. The plants look well enough, but they do not flower as they should, owing doubtless, to the prevalent lack of sunshine. Thus, I see but one spike of Cymbidium Tracyianum, and the other Cymbidiums are only throwing up in a very sparse and sluggish fashion. Even the hardy Cyps. Insigne have fewer flowers than usual, and so the tale runs throughout; these two sunless years have told upon them all.

This autumn two years ago I purchased at the sale of a collection three very large specimen plants of the common C. Insigne, and, having re-potted them into big pans, placed them in the Cool greenhouse, thinking that I could make them bloom late, so as to come in for the Spring Show, where they would be handsome objects. Result—they throve well, but did not bloom at all. In the following spring, accordingly, I moved them into the Warm greenhouse. There they have thriven still better, but not one single bloom has appeared upon them. Now they have gone into the Hot house, but what the result of this last change will be we cannot know until next autumn. My explanation of their curious behaviour is that in all probability for the last score of years or so these plants have been grown in great heat, and that the sudden change to the cool temperature, which ought to be quite sufficient for their needs, combined with the effects of re-potting, has checked their blooming capacity without interfering with their general health and growth. The irrepressible Lælia Pumila is one of the few Orchids that has flowered as it ought this autumn.

The various houses have been cleaned and rearranged on wet days, but beyond the eternal turf-laying there is nothing else to chronicle.

The last three days of the month have been comparatively fine and calm at Kessingland, with white frosts at night. Amongst other things, we have employed them in digging up the contents of the border that is to be sown down to grass. The purple Iris roots and some Periwinkle have been tied up in bundles to go home, where I can find a use for them. The Euonymus we have lifted, with as much soil as possible, and transplanted on to the face of the cliff, where I trust that they will grow. It was rather a difficult job, as that steep place is hard to stand on, but with the aid of the active boy, Bayfield has managed it somehow.

I have been reading a very interesting article in the *Field*, written in comment upon a paper in the *Gardener's Chronicle*, anent the supposed failure of the Lombardy Poplar, which is said to be a seedling variety of the Black Poplar. This Lombardy Poplar has, it appears, always been propagated by means of cuttings. The question argued is whether its decadence is owing to this cause. In short, does any given variety of tree die out in course of time if it is reproduced only from cuttings or layers, or through grafts and buds taken from the parent—that is, from a single organism? Or, to keep the species in health over a long period, must it be renewed by seminal reproduction? No one seems quite to know, but at present the balance of the argument would appear to be somewhat in favour of those who urge that the latter is the case.

We have been eating some really excellent Williams Bon Chrétien Pears grown on the stable-wall at Ditchingham, although, alas! their number is but few. So far as my experience goes, no Pear is more difficult to bring to table in proper condition than the Williams, unless, indeed, the Jargonelle be excepted. Either it is hard as wood, or rotten, and, consequently, poisonous. This year, however, Mason seems to have hit off that "just middle" which in matters of the garden, as in those of general life, is always so hard to attain.

Thus, so far as my garden is concerned, ends October, absolutely the vilest month that I can remember in the course of my conscious habitation of this uncertain sphere.[1]

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[1] Very different, at Kessingland and elsewhere, has been the lovely autumn of 1904.—H. R. H., 17th Oct. 1904.

NOVEMBER

Just before leaving Kessingland this autumn I saw a very pretty sight—the arrival of a great flock of migrant starlings. Where they came from I have not the least idea, but, though otherwise in good condition, obviously they were almost starving. They lit upon the lawns in hundreds, and began to search every inch of them for food, which they devoured ravenously, the wonder being how they managed to find so much upon that small area. It was one of the busiest and most interesting scenes of bird-life that I ever saw. When they had eaten up every worm and grub, as though by common consent they departed, leaving not a bird behind.

In the beginning of November I was in London, and took the opportunity of looking in at one of Messrs. Protheroe & Morris's bulb sales that are held at this season of the year. The attendance was much larger than at the Orchid sale that was going on in the next room, more people being interested in bulbs than in Orchids. To me the only marvel is that every gardener who can possibly do so does not rush to these sales, where he can buy beautiful bulbs at extraordinarily cheap prices. I wonder if, should Mr. Chamberlain's Protective scheme come into operation, a duty will be put on Dutch bulbs. As a matter of consistency, I do not see why it should not, or that five per cent. *ad valorem* would do much to injure the trade or hurt the purchaser. Also, if it were, the Lincolnshire and Irish growers certainly would rise up in a body and call him blessed.

Meanwhile, I have purchased several hundreds of the best Daffodils—I do not mean the new sorts, but such kinds as Emperor, Empress, Golden Spur, &c., at about half the price that I should have had to pay had they come from a leading firm of seedsmen. Nor, so far as outward appearance goes, is there anything to find fault with in their quality, for they are very fine and perfectly ripe. I intend them for the new border round the pond, when it is dug up.

The scene in this sale room was almost as busy as that on the lawn at Kessingland when the starlings, also foreign importations, were in occupation. An enormous number of lots are sold every day, and the porters, who push their way through the crowd carrying the brown bags and shooting out some of their contents on to the table for the inspection of intending bidders, have hard work to keep up with the auctioneer. Often, however, a number of lots are lumped together, which expedites matters, or when one has been sold at a certain price, similar lots are taken at the same price by customers who want them without the formality of further bidding.

All kinds of buyers are gathered here, from the country nurseryman, who is taking thousands to retail, down to the City clerk, who has run in from his counting-house to secure a bag of Crocuses for his little suburban garden, or a few potting Hyacinths for his lean-to greenhouse. These, and many others, generally pay cash and walk off with their treasures under their arms, while some who are known to the auctioneer go on the credit system, for Messrs. Protheroe will pack and forward purchases. What astonishes me, is that in this multitude of very rapid transactions the auctioneer and his clerks never seem to make a mistake. The lots that have been knocked down to a bidder will duly arrive at his home, neither more nor less; at least, that is my experience.

When I was weary of the bulb sale, for standing there in the crowd is somewhat tiring, I went to look at the Orchids. Amongst the choice lots standing upon the auctioneer's desk was a blooming Cyp. Insigne Sanderianum. As the sale had not yet begun I was able to take it down and examine it at my leisure, which I did with great interest, as I had never seen a flower of this species before. Truly, it was a lovely thing, with its fine, golden-coloured slipper and spreading dorsal sepal, all the upper part of which was a dazzling white.

I wonder what it fetched, for, as I wished to put myself out of temptation, I did not wait to see. Ten or twelve guineas, probably, or perhaps more. I wonder also whether in my lifetime this beautiful variety and those kindred to it, will ever be sold at a moderate price, that gardeners such as myself can afford. I doubt it, especially as I have been told, upon what seems to be good authority, that one grower is "cornering" Insigne Sanderianum and Insigne Sanderæ, and has already spent several thousand pounds in buying up such plants as come into the market. If this is so, their value will rise, not fall—like that of wheat when Mr. Leiter and his friends begin to secure all visible supplies.

Meanwhile, I would suggest that the best thing the impecunious lover of expensive Orchids could do, might be to insert an advertisement in the papers on the well-known and established model. Something of this sort might draw the charitable:—

To Old and Opulent Orchidists.

Do good while you may!
You cannot take your flowers with you!
They won't grow where *you* are going!

A poor but would-be honest lover of Cypripediums Insigne Sanderianum, Sanderæ, Harefield Hall variety, &c., has sore need to be protected from breaking the eighth and tenth commandments. Out of your superfluity please send him a few plants, on which carriage will be paid. Address to be had on application to *Something-for-Nothing*. As a guarantee of good faith, name also will be gladly furnished to *bonâ-fide* donors.

Surely something of this sort should move the most selfish and stony-hearted owner of these rare varieties, or so I judge from advertisements quite as impudent which are frequently to be found in the daily press,[1] and, I may add, from many letters almost as barefaced in tone and character of which I am the unhappy recipient. At any rate, will the reader please forgive the joke; it is only a little one, and there is no other.

During this past week a partial escape from the toils connected with the croquet-court has enabled us to give some much needed attention to the garden. Thus on the 2nd we lifted the Carrots and garden Beet, packed and protected them with cinder ashes. On the 3rd and 4th we cleaned the drives and the walks in the Kitchen garden, earthed up some Celery, raked leaves, burnt rubbish, and began to tidy the Asparagus beds for the winter. On the 5th we lifted the Begonias, shrub-Acacias, and other half-hardy plants, sowed Mustard and Cress and Lettuce, and began a general clearing up of the place and pleasure garden, including the removal of the torn-off branches of trees, &c., a process that lasted for several days. On the 6th and 7th we cut back the big Banksia Rose on the house, which is, I think, best dealt with at this season of the year, potted up some Heliotrope plants to secure cuttings from them, and moved those Auriculas that are to be flowered indoors to the Fig house. To-day, the 9th, also we went over the Cool orchid house, and arranged the Cypripediums that are now coming into bloom.

The reader may remember that in May or June I recorded a correspondence between myself and a kind, but personally unknown, friend in the Republic of Colombia as to an importation of Odontoglossums Crispum. Well, they have arrived, and been unpacked with many tremblings, for, remembering Mr. Tracy's story, I feared lest they should all be dead. Thankful am I to say it is better than that. Although, very probably, any gardener not accustomed to newly-imported Orchids would not offer five shillings for the whole lot of little, brown, shrivelled lumps as they came out of the case, I believe that with care out of the five hundred or over more than half should live. Of course, many are utterly dead, and others seem past praying for. Yet, if one looks at these carefully, often there may be found the first indications of a break at the base of last year's bulb, or even a suggestion of tiny, white roots.

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[1] The following touching appeal, which is said to have appeared in a recent issue of a motoring paper, is a case in point:—

"Wanted.—Will any wealthy, charitably disposed gentleman, enthusiastic auto-mobilist, or large firm, give a greatly interested man of small means a second-hand car? Applicant, who would be deeply grateful, is very keenly interested in motoring, but cannot afford to buy a car. As a guarantee of good faith he would gladly undertake not to dispose of car at any time without the full consent of donor."—H. R. H., Feb. 1904.

We have gone over them, throwing away those that are quite done for, and dividing the rest into two lots. Of these the smaller, but more numerous, collection has been arranged on a long, shady, back shelf in the Intermediate house, there to lie upon a little moss in the hope that they will plump up and be ready—such of them as mean to live—for establishing in little pots by about Christmas or New Year. The larger plants, which were lashed to sticks that had been set carefully across the case, so as to give them a little air and prevent them from fermenting, we have also gone over, cleansing them and picking out the dead specimens, and then hung them, still on their sticks, close to the roof of the Cold orchid house.

So on the whole I suppose that I should consider myself fortunate in this importation, which possibly may contain some treasure. Yet I do not think that I will venture on another, since, for a small, private grower, the risk is too great. He would, at any rate in the case of Odonts. Crispum, be wiser, I feel sure, to buy semi-established plants from some dealer, who will have endured all this loss and anxiety. Probably the cost of the stock that actually survives would be about the same, while the chance of getting something good is as great, and two years or so will be saved from the time that must elapse between the arrival and the blooming of the Crispums. With Cattleyas, which stand transport much better, the case is somewhat different. What I have to pay my kind friend for this consignment I do not yet know, for up to the present the account is not to hand.

I have been to look at a neighbour's Chrysanthemums, some of which are going to the Norwich show (where subsequently they took a second prize). They are very large and fine indeed, especially W. K. Church, a noble bronze; Nellie Pocket, a beautiful, round white; Mrs. Mease, a large, pale primrose; Sir H. Kitchener, another big bronze; Ella Herkheimer, pink, with yellow centre; an incurved green named Edmond Roger; and two excellent seedlings raised by the gardener himself, one pale blush and the other pink.

I trust that I have put down these names correctly; at least, they are as the gardener gave them to me, for I admit that the nomenclature of the hundreds of Chrysanthemums that are now grown is too much for my very moderate powers of memory.

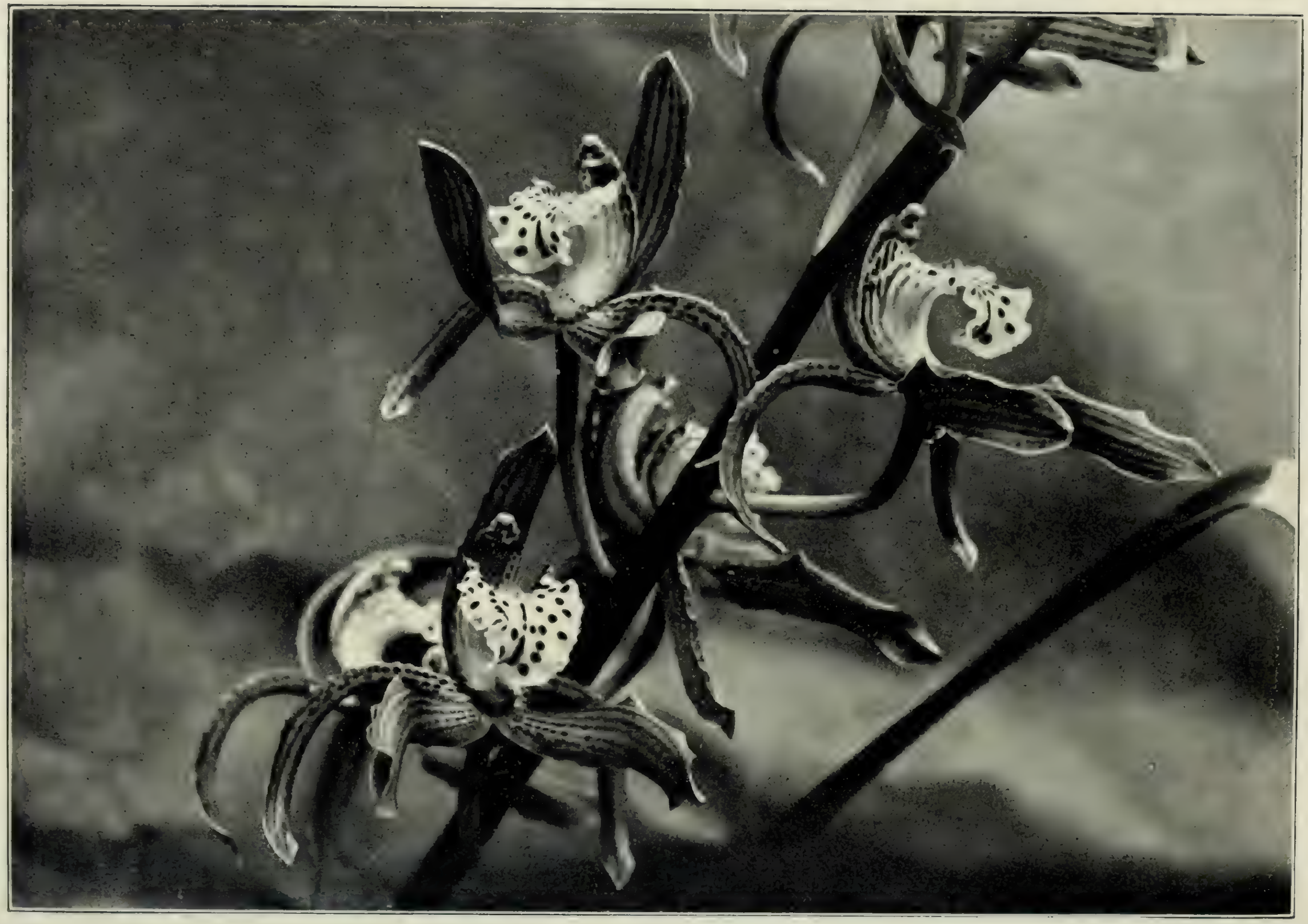
Our own Chrysanthemums are also very good this year, and for some reason much dwarfer than usual; Mason thinks because he struck the cuttings later than in previous seasons. They are arranged in a sloping bank in the Fig house, where the Tomatoes grow, and offer a fine show of colour, although the individual blooms are not so large as those of my neighbour, which are cultivated to take prizes. I think that our best specimens are the fine, incurved bronze that I have mentioned, W. K. Church, and another Japanese reflexed bronze, called G. W. Child.

I confess at once that I am not a Chrysanthemum enthusiast, except where the outdoor varieties are concerned. Notwithstanding their many hues, shapes, and kinds, there is a sameness about them that bores me, nor do I admire the huge blooms which most gardeners think it necessary to produce, as to my eye they look heavy and unnatural. I suppose that if anyone could grow a Chrysanthemum with a flower as large as a red Cabbage, he might make a fortune; but I would not give him a shilling for a cutting. Such is my personal, and possibly misguided, taste.

Now, towards the middle of the month, the weather is very mild, so much so that the birds are singing. The leaf hangs long this year, especially upon the Oaks, owing, I suppose, to the quantity of wet. On the bow windows the winter Jasmine is opening its yellow, starry blooms in great numbers. I think it a very welcome flower at this time of year, when there is literally not a thing out of doors except a few lingering Roses, of which I have managed to gather enough to fill a bowl. But, I wonder, why does this Jasmine, like the Laurestinus, elect to bloom in November and December, a season that one would think unsuitable?

On this day, the 13th, we have not yet finished with the croquet-court, for there is still some turf being laid round the edge of the pond. Also the farm-cart has arrived with the first load of road-scrapings that are to be used to dress it. I think this material better than sand, as it is very sharp and has also a certain manurial value.

On the 14th, a mild, windy day, the grit carting was continued. Also we relaid the turf under an old Portugal Laurel which stands by itself at the corner of the lawn—the same tree I mentioned some months ago as bearing such a mass of bloom. Although its lowest boughs are six feet from the ground, the grass beneath seems to have been poisoned by their influence; at any rate, the earth under them is quite bare. As we all know, prussic acid is present in the leaves of the Laurel tribe, at least, so I have always heard. Indeed, I remember that as a



PART OF FLOWERING SCAPE, CYMBIDIUM TRACEYANUM (*Bloomed at* DITCHINGHAM) boy I used to bruise these leaves and use them to stifle moths with in a bottle, which the fumes from them did very effectually. Perhaps they stifle the grass also. It is said, too, that if sprays of Laurel are mixed with flowers they will kill those flowers.

Cymbidium Tracyianum is now out, and filling the Cold orchid house with its sweet scent, but never during my ten years or so of experience have I known Cymbidiums to do so badly as this season. Yet the plants look the picture of health. The Lælias Pumila, however, are a mass of bloom, although my conviction grows that this is an Orchid which deteriorates very rapidly under cultivation in our climate, and therefore not one, so far as my experience goes, that can be recommended to the amateur. Mason has re-potted a certain Cattleya Mossiæ, which was one of the first Orchids that I ever owned. I call it the Father of the House. I remember that it carried twelve or fourteen blooms at the time of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and should, I think, produce eight or ten next year. Still, without doubt it is weakening by degrees, notwithstanding the care I take of it.

My own opinion is that all Cattleyas grown under glass in England will perish in the course of time, and I should be very interested to learn whether I am right or wrong in this view. Can anybody state for certain, for instance, that any Cattleya has flourished under such conditions for, say, thirty or forty years, and still remains quite as strong and healthy as it was at the beginning? Personally, I doubt it, although I believe that we may hope for better things from the seedlings, and especially from the hybrids born in Europe.

Two or three Odonts. Grande are in flower, gorgeous things, but with me rather shy bloomers.

In the greenhouse the Cyclamen are beginning to come out and look very healthy. Also there are a few Fuchsias and Salvias still in bloom. In the warmer division next door some Gloire de Lorraine Begonias, raised from last year's cuttings, now look very pretty with their tresses of pink bloom. One of them stands on my table as I write, a truly pleasing object.

After much consideration we decided to cut out a certain lemon-shaped Box bush, which, I suppose, has existed ever since the house was built; at any rate, the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Its situation on the grass plot was awkward, and it was by no means beautiful in itself. Now it has gone; in five minutes, Mason and his myrmidons finished its long life, and without doubt its room is better than its company. It is very curious to notice what a change can be effected in a prospect by the removal of a single tree or shrub, though sometimes, it must be admitted, that change is for the worse.

Last week I spent a day or two with my friend, Mr. Charles Longman, of Upp Hall, who is an enthusiastic gardener. He showed me a great leaf bin which he had constructed of stout planks. It has many advantages; in particular it confines the dead leaves, and prevents them from blowing about; also when trodden down in it they rot well. But I noticed that the boards rot also, so much that they must be replaced every ten years or so, which means a considerable expense. A brick pit would be better, but that must be even costlier. I have been discussing the matter with Mason, and we have found a ditch that with a little sloping will make an excellent grave for leaves and other garden refuse, in short, a kind of silo. All that is needed is to cut away the sides a little and lay a few pipes to carry off the little water that collects at the bottom. Moreover, it is a handy place into which to cart them, and clay does not rot like deal boarding.

I have been employing my Sunday leisure in making out a small order for Messrs. Bunyard and Co. We need a new tree for the Peach house, and I have determined that it shall be a Nectarine, in my opinion the best of all fruits. I have ordered an Early Rivers, a kind that I saw in bearing when I inspected the nurseries of that firm in the course of my tour through rural England. Messrs. Bunyard describe it as "often weighing half a pound, of a very fine, rich, luscious flavour, brilliant in colour; a free cropper, and one of the finest fruits ever sent out."

Also I have asked them to send me two "James Grieve" Apples, the sort that I have already described, and two Allington Pippins. This they speak of as a "splendid Apple" and a "reliable cropper." They state also that, although it resembles Cox's Orange, it is much handsomer and richer in flavour. I have ordered, further, two Charles Ross, the cross of which I think I have already spoken. Cox's Orange is one of the parents, but at the moment I forget the other, though I think it is Peasgood Nonsuch. It is said to be splendid. The last on my list, that would be longer were it possible to find room for more trees, which is not the case, are two Roundway Magnum Bonums, catalogued as being "large, melting in flesh, very aromatic, and much richer in flavour than Cox's Orange or Ribston." Such an Apple is surely most desirable, although it sounds more fit for Paradise than for a Norfolk garden. With the exception of James Grieve I have no personal experience of any of these fruits, but hope, if I live long enough, I may find that they are not over-described.

The shape of tree which I have chosen is one advertised by Messrs. Bunyard as the amateurs' half-standard, worked on a Paradise stock. The point of these half-standards is said to be that they produce fruit on spurs up the stem which will bear until the tree gains size, after which they can be removed. Messrs. Bunyard recommend this form "for early fruiting in private gardens."

To-day, the 16th, we have been lifting some of the old turf at the foot of the croquet-lawn, where the land has sunk over the filled-in ditch, in order to bring it up to level. At this spot for some years past there has grown what is called a fairy ring, producing quantities of the little brown Mushrooms known as Champignons. This ring, when exposed, or, rather, the soil beneath it, is quite grey and dusty dry, although on either side the land reeks with wet. I suppose that the phenomenon is due to the spawn of the Champignons in the soil, though why they should produce this particular effect I have not the least idea.

Mason and I have decided to root-prune several bush-Apples which grow in the Stable garden. I planted these eight or nine years ago, and they have done splendidly, but hardly produced a single fruit. Doubtless the reason of this is that they are grafted on the Crab stock, which, at any rate until the trees are old, produces more wood than Apples. So they must be dug about like the Vine in the parable, which, by the way, seems to show that root-pruning was practised in ancient days, and have their larger roots cut through in such fashion that only the small fibrous ones which produce fruit remain. It would have been better had we done this in September, and thus given the bushes a chance to re-establish themselves before winter; but I think that if the operation is carried out at any time previous to the stirring of the sap, it will probably have the desired effect.[1]

I take the opportunity again to caution my readers to be warned by this example, and, except under very exceptional conditions of soil, never to plant Pyramid or Bush Apples that are not grafted on the Paradise stock. The rootlets of this stock, however, seem to run very fleet, that is, near to the surface; indeed, I noticed that a number of those of the Pyramids which I planted last year have actually been washed bare by the rain. In order to protect them from injury and frost we shall lay a collar of strawy stable-manure round the stem of each bush.

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[1] This year, which, except for the severe drought in the early summer, with us has been a very fair one for the garden and for apples, I have root-pruned most of the non-bearing trees extensively in September. Also I have decided to head down various indifferent standards, and re-graft them with that splendid sort, Bramley's Seedling, which does magnificently on our soil.—H. R. H., 1904.

Mason has a friend who recently gave him some patent rat-poison of his own mixing, mealy-looking stuff. It occurred to him to lay some down in the Intermediate house, where the cockroaches have again become troublesome, gnawing the Cattleya blooms, the air-roots of the Vandas, &c. The results are magnificent, for, behold! this morning about a dozen of these nasty-looking vermin are lying dead upon the stage and floor, while others have doubtless crept away and perished underneath. Never till now have we been able to persuade them to touch the advertised beetle-pastes, but this rat-poison is evidently exactly to their liking. Also we killed several more in their favourite hiding-place behind the ventilator shutters.

I have been on another Thistle-spudding expedition in one of the same meadows that I attacked during the summer. There I found them again, as lusty as ever, though whether these are the same that I cut out before, or new plants which have reached their present great size during the last four months, I cannot say. It is evident, however, that this sort of Thistle is practically ineradicable, since for many years they have been duly hacked out of this little pasture, and yet about the same number reappear each summer.

As we have finally settled that our fence within the enlarged pond-railing shall be of Box, I have to-day ordered three hundred and fifty plants of the common sort from Messrs. J. Smith & Sons, of Matlock. This allows one bush per foot of the circumference.

The 17th was very dull and cold, and at about two o'clock it began to snow. The flakes were among the biggest that ever I saw, most of them being as large as a florin.

The Norwich Chrysanthemum show, which lasts for three days, begins on the 19th, and we have been busy selecting Orchids for competition. This was no easy task, for the houses at this season are unusually bare of bloom, especially as the larger Insignes are not yet out. However, here is our list. For the Single-plant Class—an Oncidium Crispum, carrying about four spikes of its graceful brown flowers, by no means a grand specimen, but the best we can do. For the Three-plants Class—a really nice Cœlogyne Ocellata Maxima, carrying a dozen spikes, and in excellent condition. This, I think, ought to be shown as the single plant, but perhaps it is not quite showy enough. A Cattleya Labiata, with five or six flowers, and a rather indifferent Oncidium Varicosum Rogersii, that bears, however, a number of golden blooms of fair size. For the Six-plant Class—an excellent Cyp. Crossianum, with five blooms; a Cyp. Tonson, also excellent, with four fine blooms; a Cyp. Insigne, with six or seven blooms; a long-tailed Masdevallia Macrura; another Cattleya Labiata, and a second Oncidium Varicosum Rogersii. Also we are sending an extra collection, composed mostly of Cypripedium hybrids, with one or two Lælias Pumila and Cattleyas.

In the garden we have been lifting Sea-kale for forcing purposes.

For the last few days—I write on the 24th—I have been staying with some friends in Hampshire, who have just purchased a house there, into which they propose to move next spring. Meanwhile, they are trying to bring the garden into order, and I, as a person supposed to understand such matters, was taken over to give advice—a dangerous thing to do. It is a pretty place, with lawns and grounds sloping down to a running trout-stream, which winds through rich meadows in the bottom.

Also there are two charming pieces of water, made with great care and expense in the past.

Near the house, and on a slope is the first kitchen garden, which I at once suggested should be devoted to flowers, as it is admirably situated for that purpose, and will look beautiful from the road and also from the windows. This advice being approved, as a beginning the planting of espalier Apple-trees at the back of a Rose-border was put a stop to, although holes had already been dug to receive them. I do not think that Apples and Roses should be mixed together, although I confess I was astonished when the gardener submitted so patiently to this upset of his plans. Another great question was as to the site of the full-sized croquet-lawn that is to be made. It will be placed on level ground near one of the ponds, but as I pointed out, the draining must be very deep, close, and thorough, since such a spot is bound to prove rather marshy.

After some search we found some fairly good turf in a meadow about half a mile away, for the old stuff is altogether too rank and tussocky to be used again. I fear, however, that notwithstanding the comparative flatness of the site, the making of this croquet-lawn will absorb a great deal of labour. Also I discovered an excellent situation for an Orchard, a strip of sloping ground with a warm aspect, and already inclosed on three sides, abutting on the upper kitchen garden. It will need deep trenching, especially as I understand that the subsoil is chalk, and I rather doubt whether my friend will succeed in getting in his Apples before next March, after which it would be too late to plant. Still, an effort should be made to do this, since in the planting of fruit it is always well to save a season if you can. Life is short, and Apples take long to grow. I only trust that my various humble recommendations may prove sound and useful in practice.

I returned home to find that, notwithstanding the rather mediocre nature of our Orchid exhibits, we have again won all the first prizes, namely, for the Single plant, the Three plants, and the Six plants; also an extra prize for the Special Exhibit. So Mason is pleased, and I suppose that the badness of the season and the fact that but few Orchids are in bloom just now, also told against our fellow-competitors.

According to the account of those who visited the Show, which I am sorry to say I was unable to do, the Chrysanthemums were particularly fine and large. One of the drawbacks to exhibiting Orchids is that the plants, or at any rate their blooms, generally suffer a good deal in the process. On the present occasion, however, this has not been the case; indeed, it would be difficult to know that most of them had ever left the houses.

Since I went away there has been a change in the garden, Charles having elected to transfer himself to the stable, preferring, I think, the care of ponies to that of flowers. In his place Mason's son has arrived, a boy of nearly fifteen. In watching this little fellow at work I have come to the conclusion that a taste for gardening is hereditary. His active experience in that line has been limited to six months in a neighbouring establishment, yet to all appearance it might have been six years. Already I see him engaged upon quite responsible work, such as the clearing and cleaning of Asparagus beds, or the cutting down and removal of herbaceous things, and hear him reminding his father that it is time to close the ventilators in the houses. Decidedly, like the poet, the gardener must be born, and not made.

During the last few days we have lifted our Salsify and Jerusalem Artichokes, and manured and dug between the Raspberry canes. Also the croquet-lawn is at last really finished, for the grit has been spread about its surface, although the wet still prevents us from raking and brushing it in. The outdoor Chrysanthemums are now all cut away, and I suppose that before very long some of the Daffodils will begin to push up between them and the surrounding Carnations, that have been tidied up and cleaned. To-day, as it is fine, we have been lifting the Parsnips and set them, crown downwards, in a little cinder dirt in such a fashion that they will catch the frost when it comes. Until this has fallen on them, Parsnips, in my opinion, are scarcely worth the eating. Also we have raised the rows of Dahlia roots which grew near the Yew fence, and stood them in the Peach house to dry, Freddy, the new boy, having first carefully cleaned them. Thence they will be taken to pass the winter in the Fig house, which is warmer. If sifted cinder-dust is placed over their crowns Dahlias will generally stand the winter out of doors, but it is not worth while to risk good sorts in this fashion.

Yesterday, the 25th, we were digging and cleaning the flower-borders, and a few seedling Cyclamen were potted off. A little over a year ago my friend Major Burnham brought me some Lily bulbs which he had dug up in a remote part of East Africa. These were potted in soil that imitated his description of that in which he found them, and set on a shelf in the Cold greenhouse. There they remained to all appearance lifeless, but now at length, in that naked fashion which is common with African bulbs, without this slightest sign of a preliminary leaf, one of them has bloomed. The flower is small, and of a bright scarlet hue, funnel-shaped, and standing upright upon a purple stem. Probably it is quite unknown in this country, so I cannot be expected to give its name.

With the aid of the old pony, Buttercup, we have been mowing the grass on the lawns, as should be done occasionally, even in the heart of winter; also, as the weather is a little dryer, we brushed in the grit on the addition to the croquet ground. The small pebbles that are mixed with it will be removed later with a broom or daisy rake, lest they should get into the knives of the machine and break them. Also we have been clearing away more stalks and rubbish from the borders, and continued weeding the Asparagus beds.

This day, too, the tradesmen arrived and began to move the railings by the Lawn pond, and to reset them at the agreed distance. Here we have now staked out our ground. First comes a foot-wide strip on the top of and added to the present bank border; then a three-foot turf walk, then the new nine-foot border, the rest of the space being allotted to the Box fence, and a ring of purple Iris set beyond it, by the railing.

I find that it will be necessary to buy some wire netting of a much finer mesh than we have used here up to the present, through which the dead leaves drift easily and in vast quantities, making the place untidy and accumulating at the bottom of the pond. As yet we have been quite unable to find time to lift and rearrange the Water-lily and Nymphæa roots, and to clear out those of the pestilent Villarsia. I fear that this business will now have to stand over until the spring.

To-day, the 27th, we have determined on a great change, namely, to do away with the present Mushroom house, which in future will become our potting-shed. Now that we have thought of it this plan has enormous advantages. Thus, by putting a few ventilators that I have lying by into the casing round the boiler chimney, it can be raised to any desired temperature, which means that Orchids and other tender things may be re-potted there at every season without running the risk of chill, and that even in frost the leaf-mould, moss, peat, &c., used in the process can be brought warm to their roots. Also the back part of the house will be still available for the forcing of Rhubarb and Sea-kale. The pots and other sundries we shall still keep in their present house, where there are frames for the storage of such things. So far so good; but there remained a difficulty—where could we grow the Mushrooms?

Mason and I walked round and round the garden, examining first one place and then another. At length we came to the conclusion that the only spot available without building was the bed part of a disused dog-kennel. Still, this had great disadvantages; for instance, the roof must be ceiled to keep out the frost; also it might again be wanted for a kennel in the future. Then a brilliant idea struck me. Near the present potting-shed, and in the same range of buildings, stands the tool-house, and opening out of it a dark place with bins in it, that for generations has been used for the storage of seed Potatoes. Obviously, if cleared, this would be an ideal home for Mushrooms, since it is warm, well-built, and ceiled, but without artificial heat. As for the seed Potatoes, if the bins were shifted into the little ante-shed, it would hold them admirably, while the present potting house could be used for the storing of the tools—all of which arrangements are possible at a very trifling expense and without the slightest loss of room. So the carpenter and the bricklayer were called in, and the business has been put in hand.

We have been eating some Sea-kale of our own forcing, and excellent it proved to be. I think that this vegetable should be much more used than is generally the case, since, to my mind, it is almost as good as Asparagus, and comes in, moreover, at a most useful time. Notwithstanding the perpetual wet, our Celery is of good size and flavour this year; indeed, I never remember it more crisp and tender. We have begun to clear the Mushroom house of the spent beds that remain upon the stages, which, by the way, have become thoroughly rotted with the damp. Also we have lifted Celeriac in the Orchard, and been engaged in washing the outsides of the Orchid houses to clean away the glass-clouding, as at the dark season, especially of this gloomy year, the plants need all the light that we can give them.

Yesterday, the 27th, it rained heavily, and to-day it is still raining. The clearing out of the various sheds goes on, the spent Mushroom manure being made use of as a dressing for the Strawberries and Carnations, &c., on the Old Vinery border. Out of the tool-house, which is in future to be used for the Mushrooms, are coming barrow-loads of the accumulated dust of ages. Amongst other things has appeared a stick that I brought from Natal long ago, and have not seen for at least ten years. Indeed, I had quite forgotten its existence, although it is a very handsome stick, cut by the Kaffirs from the beautiful black and white Umzimbeet wood; but now I remember it well enough. Doubtless in some far past day I left it standing about, and the gardener finding it, thrust it into the dark Potato house, where it has remained ever since.

The floor of this place, which, by the way, was found to rest upon beams of the rare, old brown oak, has been taken out, and to-morrow the bricklayer is going to put in some brick edgings to hold the Mushroom-beds. Of these we find that we can arrange five upon the ground level, with a two-foot path between them. If they should be wanted, also, it would be easy to fit up another tier above. The Potato bins go well into the old tool-house, as I thought they would.

This place has a window with an iron bar across. Once, very many years ago, there was a gardener here, an imperious old gentleman named Skinner, whom nobody dared to pension off. So another man had to be hired to do his work, leaving him master of the garden until he died. This old fellow would never condescend to go into the kitchen. It was his habit when he wished to know what vegetables were required, to stand in the tool-house and knock with a stick upon that iron bar across the window until the cook arrived. If she did not arrive she got no vegetables that day. However, all this was long before my time; the cook has departed, that gardener has been buried for decades; only the iron bar and the tradition are left.

In the Cool orchid house Cypripedium Actæus, of which I spoke at the beginning of this book, is again in flower. This time it carries two blooms, and the diversity between them is most interesting to see.

Cyp. Actæus, as it may be remembered, is the result of a cross between Cyp. Insigne Sanderæ and Cyp. Leeanum Superbum, the parents of the latter being Cyp. Insigne Montanum and Cyp. Spicerianum. Thus Actæus has a double strain of Insigne blood, for the difference between Insigne Sanderæ and Insigne Montanum is chiefly one of colour. The two blooms upon my plant, or rather plants, for I have no doubt that they are separate seedlings potted together although raised from the same pod, vary, however, to an extraordinary extent. Both are beautiful, but one, I think that which flowered last spring, shows the influence of its Spicerianum grand-parent very plainly, the pouch being of the same rounded shape, and the colour not unlike. Indeed, did I not know the truth, I should, I think, have mistaken it for a fine, unusually yellow variety of Leeanum, especially as it has the same purple stem. The other has the green stem of Insigne Sanderæ, a flower of the same shape and a pouch almost as yellow. In short, it "favours the father," as they say here of children, and I should imagine must be an excellent variety, although of this I cannot be sure, as I have never seen any other specimen of Actæus. Certainly it is a joy to look at.

With the exception of one very bold and yellowish flower, nothing out of the way has as yet appeared among the new lot of Insignes that I obtained from Mr. Tracy, although there are some well-marked specimens. The remainder do not vary particularly from the common type, but as not more than a quarter of the plants have bloomed, there is hope for another year.

Torrents of rain have been falling, as usual, and I see that what I feared has happened—there is a slight settlement towards the top of the croquet-court addition, for the water stands over a space of perhaps fifteen feet square. I do not suppose that this depression is deeper than from a quarter to half an inch, and the wonder is that there are not others more serious, seeing that the turf was laid in a perfect slush of mud. However, it must be rectified, and this we propose to do by laying grit upon the spot to whatever thickness proves necessary, and allowing the grass to grow through it, which it will do by the spring.

Yesterday, Sunday, the 29th, we had cold snow, but to-day the sun got out brightly about twelve o'clock. Mason has been engaged in taking the first batch of Chrysanthemum cuttings, which vary a good deal in height, those of a moderate length being the best. They will be potted and stood in a frame with just enough pipe heat to keep out the frost. This year I have about a dozen pots of Carnations which we raised ourselves from seed. Until recently they stood in the border, but have now been lifted and placed in the Fig house. This seed came from Germany, and its growers call the sort Bench Carnations, meaning, I suppose, that they do best in a house. They are handsome, and of good shape and colours, and from their general appearance must, I imagine, be the result of a cross with the well-known Malmaison variety. I find them most useful for buttonholes, for which purpose the Carnation is the best flower that is grown. Another year I hope to increase my stock of this excellent kind.

We have covered over our bed of Christmas Roses, which are now budding up, not with a frame, as usual, but with some top-lights only, supported at the ends and sides upon boards. This plan will give them sufficient shelter, and at the same time allow them more air and keep them closer to the glass. Also we have put similar lights over some Parsley to protect it from the frost, prepared a frame to receive winter Lettuce, and carted more manure to be used on the new border round the Lawn pond.

The General Post (I wonder if that old Christmas game is ever played now) goes on merrily between the former Mushroom, Potting, Tool, and Potato sheds, but the woodwork in the first of these proves to be so rotted with the damp that it must all be renewed. Also for the same reason a new potting-table has become a necessity.

DECEMBER

To-day, December 1st, is cold, with more snow showers. We have been giving their last shift to our little lot of Cinerarias, a valuable plant to grow, on account of the variety and brilliant nature of its colouring, that is, if it is kept clear of green-fly, to the attacks of which it is so liable. These have been stood away in the same frame with the Chrysanthemum cuttings taken yesterday, where pipe heat can be turned on when required, until the time comes to move them into the greenhouse. Also we have potted up a little lot of seedling Cyclamen, coloured varieties, a welcome gift from a neighbouring garden, as most of mine are white. The manure for this frame, in which Cucumbers were grown in the early summer, has been barrowed out and used upon the Strawberry and Asparagus beds. In the latter case, after careful weeding, we move an inch or so of the top soil, put on a thin and even coat of rotted manure, and cover over again with the moved soil.

Wednesday, the 2nd, proved a beautiful day, all sunlight and stillness, except when the silence was broken by the sharp chatter of the jackdaws, the shadow of whose wheeling wings was reflected from the clear ice on the pond, or by the hum of a distant thrashing-machine. It froze last night, and the ground is white with hail, melting now in the warm sun, and so hard with frost that the men have not come to continue moving the railings. We have begun thinning and pruning the Gooseberry bushes, tying the remaining shoots to the wire-fence which I have described. They have made a

FRONT LAWN IN SNOW

good growth this wet year. In one of the recently-cleared frames we have placed about a score of pots of early Ash-leaf Potatoes, setting a single tuber in each eight-inch pot. Potatoes gently forced in this fashion are most welcome in the spring, and every one who has room should try to grow a few.

The boy Freddy has been engaged in cleaning the Canna roots and the Crinum Lily-bulbs, which have been lifted from the border, where they increased in size this summer, and packing them away with the Dahlias in the Fig house. Also we have taken up a large quantity of Tropæolum Tuberosum bulbs, and stored them beneath the stage in the greenhouse for the winter. I know no other bulbs that are so pretty as these with their mottled markings of red and white.

There fell a sharp frost this night, and the 3rd was bitterly cold, although the wind lay in the south-west. We have been clearing the Stable border, digging vacant land and carting manure to the Orchard with which to mulch the young fruit-trees. I am glad to find that I have two more plants than I thought of the beautiful Geranium Iberica, of which I have already spoken. I think that I shall be able to divide one large specimen into about a dozen separate roots for the new Pond border, where they will be very welcome, especially as the seeds taken from that in the Elm-tree bed have failed to grow.

This morning I have heard from Mr. Tracy that the unknown, ivory-white Cypripedium seedling which I have described, is Cyp. Leo, a cross between Cyp. Spicerianum and Cyp. Villosum. As he says so after inspecting the flower, doubtless this is the case; but how the dark-pouched Spicerianum and the glossy, orange-red Villosum have between them managed to give birth to this white beauty, which is also so much larger than either, I cannot imagine. Spicerianum I can trace by the purple line upon the back sepal, but the rest of the combination passes understanding, and is indeed one of Nature's surprises.

I read in the local papers that there are still many acres of barley standing in the fields in parts of Norfolk and Suffolk. It is strange to think of it, and then rise and look at the sleet driving past the windows. What a commentary on the season!

On the 4th the weather was milder, but dull, a good day on which to transplant winter Lettuce into the frame that has been prepared for it, which we did accordingly. The Box for the Pond-border fence has arrived, and as the railing is not finished, has been inlaid in lines. It is very good stuff, from nine to twelve inches in height, and, as I can see from the soil clinging to its roots, was grown in reddish loam. The shrubs must be quite five years old, and three hundred and fifty of them are certainly not dear at the price of about 35s, to which they come, with packing.

We had some Indian-corn cobs at table, one of the best of vegetables when there is any corn on them, which is seldom the case this year. Indeed, some of ours have not more than a dozen grains to a cob. It is one of the garden failures of 1903, and another is the Capsicum, which has produced no pods at all. However, by way of compensation, the Celeriac is of a better flavour than usual.

I spent an hour or so this afternoon in sawing off the lower boughs of the two Yew trees which we left when we cleared away the other shrubs by the croquet-lawn. The exercise was excellent, for Yew is an uncommonly tough wood to cut in a cramped position, and the effect quite equalled my expectations, for now the trees look smart, and the lawn is visible beneath their lowest boughs. Also this cutting away will enable us to turf up to their stems, which has since been done.

The Cyps. Leeanum are opening well in the Cool orchid house, and look as lovely as ever. I think them among the most successful of all the hybrid Cypripediums. My specimen of Cœlogyne Ocellata, one of the prize-winners at the recent show, is now going over, I am sorry to say. I wish that more Orchids would follow the example of Cyp. Sedeni, a hybrid between Cyp. Schlimii and Cyp. Longifolium. Of these I have several, especially one noble specimen that blooms practically all the year round without injury to its growth and vigour.

The beautiful, white Masdevallia Tovarensis is out again, and bearing a number of its glistening flowers. This, in my opinion, is worth all the other Masdevallias put together, and a sort that every one should cultivate, as it is very easy to grow in a cool, dampish house, or so I have found. Moreover, it increases rapidly, and generally makes itself quite at home under glass.

On the 5th we were collecting and turning manure to be made into beds in the new Mushroom house, and afterwards engaged upon that wearisome but necessary task, the clearing-up of leaves in the Shrubbery. I have been examining the Cœlogynes with Mason, and we are both agreed that never have we seen such a show for bloom as, strangely enough, the plants present this year. Unless something happens to them between now and next February, most of them should be masses of glorious white.[1] Also the bulbs that they have made are very large and firm.

I read in the *Gardening World* that Cœlogyne Cristata should be removed from the house during fumigation, as otherwise the flower scapes will turn black and rot. As a curious commentary upon this useful piece of information I may mention that in past years, when I used to fumigate, this disaster has overtaken us in varying degrees. Since I gave up fumigation in favour of the less expensive but equally effective system of syringing with the X L wash, to the best of my knowledge nothing of the sort has happened. Therefore, although I have always thought that the blackening of the scapes was due to over-watering after the bulbs had made up their growth, I am now inclined to believe that the wise H. J. who writes in the *Gardening World* is correct in his surmise that this trouble is caused by fumes from the vaporiser. Thus it is that gardeners live and learn.

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[1] They were.—H. R. H., 1904.

We have taken advantage of the sharp frost to place heaps of grit ready to fill up the slight depression of which I have spoken in the croquet-lawn addition, barrowing it thither over a board laid upon the grass. We have not spread it, however, as turf should never be trampled, rolled, or otherwise interfered with during frost, for then the brittle blades of grass are easily bruised. Indeed, I may mention (this I add a week afterwards) that I can still see where the man wheeled away the empty barrow when his task was done; also the marks of his feet, that are clearly to be traced by the bruises in the turf on which he walked.

This has been one of those strange days that we experience now and again in winter, perhaps once in every two or three years; I can only remember four or five of them. The air is full of subdued frost, yet fog lies like cotton-wool upon the surface of the earth. In the afternoon I went out walking. Cold and dense indeed was the mist, but sounds travelled far through it, for I could hear the call of a distant partridge with wonderful distinctness, and although it must have been a mile or more away, the bark of a dog seemed so loud as to be almost startling. A man was in the field on my right, and quite invisible; yet my ear could catch every clink of the fork which he was using to spread manure. In the field to the left one of my ploughmen and his horses suddenly loomed up beyond the fence, then they turned, and before they had gone five yards grew dim and vanished in the soft, white cloud. A flock of sparrows crossed the road with a rush of wings, passing just above my head, for they did not see me. In an instant they were come and gone, though for a long while I could still distinguish the beating of their wings upon the heavy air. I looked at the bank beside me, and there, on golden Bracken and purple Bramble leaf, lay the rime, bending the tall, sere grasses almost to the ground. So stirless was the atmosphere that no twig of the Elm-tree above me even quivered; these were as though they had been frozen into the whitest stone, and already the premature darkness of night was pressing down like a pall thrown over the face of the shrouded earth.

The frost has been working its usual damage in the greenhouses. Thus, notwithstanding the strips of zinc which I have nailed along the bars to lead away the drip, some drops of the melted ice that will collect beneath the glass have fallen into the heart of the young shoots of two of the Odonts. Crispum in the Cold orchid house. The shock has destroyed them, and I have just pulled out their rotted remains. There is now no chance of those plants blooming before the year 1905. I believe, however, that greenhouses can be built which by some peculiar arrangement of the bars are made drip-proof. If so, I recommend them to the attention of all Orchid-growers, for nothing is more vexatious than to see one's pet plants ruined in this fashion. Still, thanks to the broad strips of zinc which I invented, our loss through frost-drip is infinitely less than it used to be.

On Sunday, the 6th, the cold fog still hung, though it was not so dense, and on the 7th it rained again, as now it always does. We went on pruning the Apple and Pear trees, and laid more manure round their roots. Also we made a beginning of potting up the importation of Odonts. Crispum, placing two of the most forward pieces in each pot, of which we have done about thirty.

They look shrivelled little things, but those who live long enough will doubtless see them develop into plump, blooming plants. As I have said, Patience should be the breastplate of the Orchid-grower. When all this collection is worked up I fear that we shall have some difficulty in finding room for its stowage. Well, the Cymbidiums must be more closely crowded so as to leave a shelf of the back-staging available for the Crispums.

The 8th and 9th I spent in London, where I had important business at the Central Chamber of Agriculture. It was dreadful weather there, but as I slopped along the streets I saw some flower-hawkers with good specimens of Gloire de Lorraine Begonias on their barrows. Evidently that excellent plant is coming into fashion for household use, as, indeed, it deserves to do, for it is one of the best things that have been introduced of late years.

When I returned, it was to find that there had been another deluge at Ditchingham. So heavy was it that the Kitchen-garden pond has filled up and washed out the brickwork which protects the overflow-pipe. This damage it will be impossible to repair until a dry time comes, if ever it does again. Then it must be done thoroughly, since it is now evident where the water has escaped, namely, not through a sand-fault only, but behind that brickwork, which may, however, have hidden other faults.[1]

The new potting-shed, *i.e.* the old Mushroom house, has been finished and furnished with its bench, and is really an ideal place. There will be ample room, deducting that still devoted to forcing purposes, for two men to pot at once, also for the stowage of peat and soil beneath the table. Four ventilators let into the outer casing of the chimney now admit the waste heat which before we were so anxious to exclude, so that the temperature will never be below 60°, and when the fire is brisk, rather more. The only fault that I have to find with it is that there might be more light, but this difficulty has been partially overcome by placing two large panes of glass in the upper part of the door, which on warm days can, of course, always stand open.

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[1] See footnote, page 55.

During the wet Mason has been cleaning up the Orchid houses, which now look very smart, especially the Cool house, where the Cypripediums make a fine show. Also he has potted more of the Crispums, and continued pruning in the Orchard. Here, to our sorrow, we find that during the few days of frost the bull-finches, or tomtits, or both, have already begun to work upon the bloom-buds of the Pear-trees, a number of which they have picked out. We must spray with London Purple before more hard weather comes, in the hope that it will protect them, as, indeed, it does to some extent. The Pond railing is finished at last, and in a few days after we have completed various jobs in the Orchard, I hope to begin the digging of the border.

To-day, the 10th, Knowles is cleaning the ditch by the rubbish heap, and laying four-inch pipes, some of those which remain over from the supply that I procured for the new drain to the Kitchen-garden pond, in a trench cut at its bottom. Some of the excavated soil is then replaced over the pipes, so that the ditch will now become a dry pit for the reception of leaves and rubbish. By the way, we have laid up a quantity of pure Beech and Oak leaves to rot into leaf-mould, which will be used in the potting of Orchids on the new principle.

The 11th was very fine, with sun after the wet, and on it we finished laying the pipes in the new rubbish pit, rolled the lawns, and swept the drive. Also the tying of the Gooseberries to the wires was completed, and the large Gooseberry-bushes which stand apart were pruned and bound about with string, so that all the shoots were brought together in a bundle. The object of this proceeding, of course, is to make them so compact that the birds cannot easily creep in and pick off the flower-buds.

We have settled that the insides of all the greenhouses, and of the Cucumber and cold frames, must be re-painted. This is a troublesome and rather expensive job, but to neglect it longer would be a false economy, as, once the wood gets bare, moisture collects upon it and rots the wall-plates and rafters, which then have to be replaced bodily. Frequently I receive advertisements of "imperishable" paints, but I am sorry to say that none of those which we use even remotely fulfil that description. Next year, when the outsides of the various houses will have to be dealt with, they shall certainly be done with the red oxide paint, which does really stand the weather well. These dull, damp days are naturally unsuited to the operations of even inside painting, but this it would be impossible to carry out at any other time of year, since during spring, summer, and autumn the various houses and frames are filled with their respective crops.

The carpenter is employed in mending up the movable frames, or all of them that are not in use, especially two of our top lights, which were leant against a wall to protect some outside Tomatoes, and in one of the recent gales blown over and badly smashed. I am asking him for an estimate for a new double-frame, as some of ours have been in use for so many years that they are now practically worthless.

In this mild weather we are giving the frame Violets all the air possible. To-day, for instance, the lights are entirely removed.

A little while ago I ordered from different growers two pounds weight of the Northern Star Potato, one pound from Lincolnshire and one from Kent, as I wished to see which seed gives the best results. The Kent grower charged three and sixpence for his pound, and the Lincolnshire man four shillings. The Kent seed, which arrived first, was the lighter in colour, and consisted of seven Potatoes, round in shape, and in no way remarkable in appearance, weighing together one pound two ounces. Mason and I have examined them, and come to the conclusion that these seven tubers will furnish us with about eighteen sets—of course, by cutting them into separate eyes. Some people are of opinion that this growing from eyes is injurious to the constitution of Potatoes, but I cannot say that such is my experience, although I have thought sometimes that a smaller number of tubers results from each root thus raised, but that, as they are larger, the total weight of the produce is about the same. Propagation from stem-cuttings is, however, as I believe, not desirable, at any rate for more than one generation. Whatever may be the truth of this matter, of seed that costs four shillings the pound the most must be made. Next year, if each set bears from five and a half to nine pounds of Potatoes, as it is advertised to do, we shall not need to be so economical.

Of this Northern Star wondrous tales are told. It is said to be extraordinarily robust; to throw up stems five feet in height that completely cover the ground, even when the seed is set a yard from plant to plant; to bear enormous and unfailing crops, and to defy all disease. If it fulfils these conditions, which, all being well, we should know before another year is out, the troubles of Potato-growers ought to be at an end. But will it fulfil them? Is not the story too good to be true.[1]

Four shillings a pound is, I think, nearly £450 a ton; but what is that compared to the price of a new variety of Potato, of the kidney kind I gather, Eldorado by name, which has just been put upon the market? If the reports that I read in the newspapers may be taken as approximately correct, this kind was sold at the Cattle Show in the Agricultural Hall the other day at the rate of £450 a pound, which, it is stated—I have not worked out the sum myself—equals the value of £1,008,000 per ton; that is, about eight times the price of pure gold! Clearly Eldorado must be well thought of by growers, and I hope that these bold speculators will make a profit upon their expensive purchases.

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[1] These two pounds of potatoes cut into about 25 sets, which, carefully planted and manured, produced in all twenty pounds' weight of tubers. The exceedingly dry season of 1904 probably accounts for much of this undoubted difference between promise and performance.—H. R. H., Aug. 1904.

The fact is, that many new Potatoes are enormously boomed, with or without reason. It would seem, further, that the good qualities which they show in the first years of their existence are by no means stable, and that in ten or a dozen seasons they are apt to lose most of them. A little while ago White Elephants and Up-to-Dates were all the rage; indeed, I saw hundreds of acres of the latter in the Isle of Axholme and elsewhere when I journeyed through England in 1901. Now, however, these are going out of favour, and will doubtless be supplanted by Northern Stars and Eldorados, till in turn their reign is over. Meanwhile, there are several other kinds that I should like to try; for instance, the new Main Crop sort, said to be a disease-resister, called King Edward VII., of which seven pounds' weight can be bought for three shillings, and the White Kidney, an early kind, also disease-resisting, Sir John Llewellyn, obtainable at the same price. In these, indeed, I think I must experiment.

It is a melancholy admission for the owner of an orchard to be obliged to make, but to-day there have arrived here direct from the Liverpool importers two casks of Apples. They are Canadian grown Newtown Pippins and Baldwins, of the second grade, which is quite large enough for all ordinary purposes. The green-coloured and well-flavoured Newtowns need no description; they are excellent, though in my opinion not so good as our best English sorts when we can grow them. The Baldwins, which I have never seen before, are cooking Apples, that can also be used for dessert purposes at a pinch. Their appearance is magnificent, the colouring being of a rich red, and their size ample. With these, then, we have been filling a few of the yawning shelves of the Apple house, left empty by the rigours of the English climate. They are packed without paper, but evidently all unsound fruits have been carefully excluded, since in each barrel not more than a dozen Apples had begun to decay. I suppose that the Herefordshire manufacturers will be obliged to make their cider from foreign fruit this year.

To-day, the 12th, I was still able to gather a nice bowlful of Roses from the bed in the Stable garden, reds and whites together. Most of the latter were Teas, of which the Gloire de Dijons are the best. We have been watering the Orchids, which at this time of year we only do twice a week, and giving the blooming Cypripediums and the Cœlogynes in spike a little weak liquid manure.

On Monday, the 14th, when the weather continued mild and sunny, we made up our first Mushroom-beds in the new house. May they prosper there! Freaks was engaged weeding the patch that is planted with the purchased Strawberry runners of various sorts. Compared to our own plants, which grow alongside of them, they are but weak little things. Indeed, some of them have perished altogether, and it requires care to distinguish the rest from the chickweed and other herbs that have sprung up about them. Although they cost a good deal more, I think that in the end it pays better to buy potted-up runners from the dealers. Also we have planted out our stock of Auriculas for spring blooming upon the wall border in the flower-garden. There must be about three hundred of them, reared from our own seed for the most part, and although some may not bloom, they should make a pretty show in their season. When the planting was finished we mulched the bed with spent Mushroom manure. The converted ditch being now ready, we have been engaged also in forking into it a first consignment of leaves and other rubbish, a task which we continued on the 15th.

On that day we set some of the beds in the Flower-garden with various things for spring blooming, amongst them the rose-coloured Saponaria Calabrica, Silene Pendula Compacta, Alyssum Saxatile Compacta, one of the showiest yellow sorts, Myosotis, Polyanthus, and a few other things. We should have done this before if we had found time, but luckily the weather has been kind to us, and so it does not greatly matter. These plants ought to bloom well by the end of April, or before it, and stand until it is time to bed out.

On the 16th we were raking up leaves in the Shrubbery, for the Farm to cart away and use in the cow-sheds, a most wearisome business that consumes a great amount of time. Indeed, the weather being suitable, that is, dry and windless, for three solid days did we rake without ceasing. The worst of it is that the Farm, having its own affairs to attend to, often neglects to cart the leaves when raked, with the result that they blow about again in the first wind. Also the grass being at length dry enough, we brushed off the little stones that had been carted on to the Croquet-lawn addition with the road-grit, mulched the Strawberry runners, and untied the trees in the Peach house in preparation for the painting.

On the 17th I received two hundred and fifty retarded Lily-of-the-valley crowns, which I have bought, and proceeded to pot them in accordance with the instructions. These are, that they should be set in shallow boxes—I use pots three parts full of crocks, with about three inches of soil upon the top of them, and a little moss—set in heat, and kept quite dark for two days. After this they are to be gradually exposed to light, and when the flower is showing well, placed in an unshaded greenhouse. The bottom heat we have provided by standing the pots upon slates resting on the hot-water pipes in the Cool orchid house, which pipes are never very hot. The darkness is secured by inverting another pot over the crowns and stopping the hole in the bottom with a plug of clay. Thus it will be easy to admit and gradually increase light by tilting the edge of the covering pot. I hope that our care may be rewarded, but to me the crowns look very weak.

On the 18th and 19th the leaf-raking went on, and I sent a message to the Farm to say that if the heaps were not removed at once, I should rid myself of the same by burning them. I mentioned a little while back a visit that I made to inspect a neighbour's Chrysanthemums, several of them of the gardener's own rearing. Now that neighbour has kindly sent me a large bloom of the incurved type, also raised by the gardener, I do not know from what parents. She has named it "Pearl-Maiden," and really I think it very beautiful, quite good enough, indeed, to be placed in commerce among the new varieties. The flower is of a dazzling white, as I have said, large, round, and of a compact shape. Evidently that gardener thoroughly understands Chrysanthemums, how to produce and grow them.

I have been reading in the *Gardening World* that really good Water-cress can be had even in winter from beds made up in cold frames at the end of August, the materials used being half-rotted leaves and manure covered with six inches of loam and leaf-soil mixed, and set with cuttings about eight inches apart. The subsequent treatment required seems to be of the simplest, since it is stated that four good waterings will carry the Cress over Christmas, and that of it, with good management, several bushels can be gathered from an ordinary two-light frame. Devoutly do I wish that I had acquired this information earlier, as I am devoted to Water-cress, and yet afraid to eat that which is gathered in our local streams, knowing them to be all more or less polluted with sewage.[1]

Hitherto in my innocence I have imagined that the London Water-cress was quite above suspicion, but now it appears from various reports in the papers, which are also commented on in the *Gardening World*, that is by no means the case. It seems that the Medical Officer of Health for Hackney, Dr. J. King Warry, has traced outbreaks of enteric fever in Hackney to the Water-cress sold in that district, seventeen specimens which he examined, together with samples of the waters wherein they were grown, having all been proved to be polluted. Pursuing his investigations he discovered that in one instance the Cress was raised in pure sewage, which, of course, stimulates its growth enormously. What would be the right name to apply to that grower and—apparently—to many others of his tribe? The reader can fit it for himself.

The fact is that, in sundry ways, especially where human life is concerned, we English are still an extremely barbarous people. There are acts and regulations, although none sufficiently stringent, designed to protect the public from illness or death inflicted upon them through the greed or gross carelessness of nefarious individuals; but how seldom are these properly enforced! How can they be honestly administered, indeed, when they are so frequently left to be applied by persons directly or indirectly interested in the profits resulting from the sale of unsound or impure articles of food. All such measures are to a large extent useless, unless the working of them is left in the hands of authorities who are entirely free from the pressure of local considerations, and who have no ends of their own to serve in connection with the matters they are supposed to supervise.

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[1] Since the above was written I have made the experiment of growing Water-cress in a sunk bed in the garden. It has proved most successful, as for months past that bed, which only needs occasional waterings with pure water, has supplied us with an abundance of Water-cress twice a day and, as yet, shows no sign of exhaustion—H. R. H., August 1904.

Mr. H. G. Wells points out in his book, "Mankind in the Making," that in the year 1900 over 21,000 little children "died needlessly" in a single English county without this trifling matter exciting the slightest interest in Parliament or elsewhere. The reason that he gives for so monstrous a state of affairs is that out of this "perennial massacre of the innocents" no party-politician can suck advantage. But when in the same year a certain number of Boer children died quite unavoidably in the Concentration Camps of the Transvaal, the whole world rang with the humanitarian outcry of party-politicians.

So it is, alas! This instance of polluted Water-cress beds and the typhoid that results from them is only another example of the unwillingness of our local authorities to incur unpopularity—or perhaps, in extreme cases, personal loss—by interfering with profit-earning industries merely because they bring unsuspecting folk prematurely to the grave. It is, I suppose, a survival of that ancient and evil principle of English law, that property is of more importance than the person. How often do we observe, especially those of us who are concerned in the administration of that law, that the brute who half murders his wife or children receives less punishment than the sinner who, perhaps under pressure of great want, steals food or a shilling wherewith it may be bought.

For a long while past a certain frog has inhabited the Cool orchid house—I think that it was placed there by my little girl two or three years ago. What that frog lived upon I have never been able to discover, but his condition has remained fairly good. On Sunday morning, however, I found him seated on the flooring looking very wan and pale, though bloated, and observed that his hind-legs appeared to be partially paralysed.

Thinking that, as the weather was mild, it would be a good opportunity to restore him to a more natural course of life—for I do not see the creature more than twice or thrice a year—I opened the door and tried to urge him through it with my toe. Move he would not, however; indeed, all he did was to put down his head and utter a succession of thin, piercing screams. So, as I dislike touching frogs, I persuaded a courageous military friend to catch and to carry him to the ditch near the pond, where, the soil being soft, we thought that he might bury himself after the fashion of his kind in winter. Apparently he did so, notwithstanding the weakness of his legs, since when we returned from church no trace of him could I find, nor has he appeared since. I am certain that if I had left him much longer in the greenhouse the poor thing would have died.

On Monday, the 21st, the leaf-raking being at length finished, we got us to our daily tasks again. Amongst them on this and a few following days were the making up of Mushroom-beds in the new house, the cleaning and mulching of the Orchard Strawberry plot, and the weeding and protection of the large Asparagus patch in the same place, which until now we have had no time to deal with. Also we have been dealing with the square flower-bed in front of the Cold orchid house, forking and manuring it, and dividing the crowns of various perennials that grow there, in order to provide stock for the new Pond-border when it is made. To the Elm-tree beds after they had been tidied up we have given a coating of fresh soil, which, on account of the roots beneath, is necessary every year to feed the plants that grow therein.

Another very interesting task has been the planting of the sides and bottom of the ditch that lies at the foot of the croquet-lawn addition. I think that it should look pretty next spring and summer, for we have set in it a number of Saxifrages, Polyanthus, Ferns, and other things, and in the bottom some water-plants and a few clumps of the purple Iris from Kessingland, which appears to have no objection to damp and even to occasional flooding.

Though sunless the weather remains mild, so much so that on the 22nd I picked some violets in the open. On the 24th, however, it turned cold and threatened snow. On that day I received some Dog-violets (Erythronium) which I have bought, as we have none in the garden. They are curious-shaped little bulbs, but only recently have I discovered that it is from these bulbs that their vulgar name comes —Dens canis, or Dog's-tooth, which they resemble. I think their oval, brown-marked leaves even prettier than the flowers. We have planted them in little groups in the Rockery, as they like shade and shelter, setting them three inches deep in a prepared soil of peat and loam. With them came some Fritillaria Meleagris, the common Fritillary that is indigenous in England. These I already have, but the lot now purchased are white, since, as I believe I mentioned in the beginning of this book, mine of that hue have in the course of years reverted to the dark purple colour of the type. We have set them in ordinary soil at the foot of the Flower-garden wall, where they are not likely to be disturbed.

The eight Apples that I ordered have arrived also and been duly planted, not without difficulty, as they are absolutely the last that the garden will accommodate. The two Allington Pippins are nice Amateur standards of about five years' growth, and the James Grieves, to which I have allotted the most exposed position, as, coming from Scotland, they are supposed to be very hardy, good bushes. But the Charles Ross and the Roundway Magnum Bonums, being new sorts, are, as I expected, but maidens, with a single shoot, and will bear no fruit for another three years. Still, the stocks are well rooted, and they will be growing while we sleep.

We planted them all with great care, digging good holes, trimming the roots where necessary, and placing a bushel or two of lime-rubble at the bottom of each pit for drainage. Having spread out the fibres, fine soil was worked in between them and trodden down, the whole being so arranged that the bushes are raised a little above the surrounding surface. To finish up with, the larger specimens were staked to prevent their disturbance by wind, and a mulch of manure laid around each as a protection against frost. The Early Rivers Nectarine that came with them has also been planted in the Peach house, where the men have at last finished their painting. In order that it may have the best possible chance of thriving there, we have dug out a good deal of soil, twenty barrow-loads, perhaps, from the spot upon which it is to stand, and replaced it with new material. It is a nice fan-trained tree of about four years' growth, as, indeed, it should be for seven and sixpence, which is its cost.

This Thursday, Christmas Eve, was a somewhat broken day, as Mason has been engaged all the afternoon in helping to decorate the house with the seasonable Holly and Evergreens. The custom is one that has fallen into some disuse of late years, but I like to keep it up in a modest fashion. I can remember that when I was a lad at our home in another part of Norfolk this decoration was quite a solemn business. Thus long and elaborate Holly wreaths were manufactured and hung in festoons over the old panelling of the Vestibule, nor was one single piece of green removed till Twelfth Night had gone by. Now the rubbish heap gets it all before New Year's Day.

On the 28th we actually saw the sun, for the first time, I think, for about three weeks. Indeed, it shone brilliantly until New Year's Eve, which was very dull, for, appropriately enough, this gloomy year went out in densest gloom. On the 29th and 30th, however, there were blue skies and sharp frosts: skating, even, was talked of, but did not happen. Expecting a spell of really severe weather, we spread litter over the Rose-beds, and syringed the Pears and Plums with London Purple in the hope that it might disgust our old enemies the bullfinches. So far as present appearances go, we might have spared ourselves the trouble, but doubtless the frost will come in April and May, if not earlier.

My retarded Lily crowns, not to put too fine a point on it, are a ghastly failure. Of course, this may be our fault, but all I can say is that we have followed every direction with exactitude. Results—a number of pots filled with jagged and uneven growths, a few of which bear spikes of small-sized and indifferent bloom. I should much like to know whether other gardeners are really successful with these frozen things. If so, either the crowns were bad or it is our skill which is to seek. In future I shall content myself with pots of Lily-of-the-valley grown or forced in the usual fashion.

I forgot to mention that the other day our boiler went wrong, with the common perversity of such things taking advantage of the frost to do so. Being burnt away to their ends, some of the furnace bars dropped down, so there was nothing for it but to draw the fire. While the cavity was still so hot that I should have imagined that he would have been cooked like a joint in an oven, the wretched bricklayer's boy was thrust into it, all but his heels, and proceeded to effect repairs by the light of a melting candle.

Luckily these did not prove extensive, as a piece of iron set behind the bars remedied the mischief for a while, so that before the houses were quite cold the fire was alight again. But what a dreadful thing it would be if the boiler gave out entirely in intense frost! Then I suppose that there would be nothing for it—

if the mischief were discovered in time, which, should it befall at night, might not happen—except to move all the plants into the dwelling-house, where I imagine they would be scarcely welcome, especially on watering-days! Of course, in large establishments such catastrophes are guarded against by the provision of a duplicate boiler which can be brought into use if necessary.

We have been packing up our Rhubarb, or rather certain lots of it, with long litter, having first placed pots or large drain pipes over the crowns, and earthed up the late Celery. This is a crop, by the way, that, as I now ascertain for certain, has done very well with us this year, the yield being good, and the quality excellent, nor so far has it suffered from rot, notwithstanding the perpetual wet. I attribute our success to care in the earthing up, which has been carried out by degrees and not too soon. If Celery is closed in very early with great banks of soil, it is, I have noticed, extremely liable to decay. Also we have dug the land between the fruit bushes, sprayed these and the Pear and Plum trees with London Purple to keep off the birds, and spawned and soiled our first Mushroom-bed. Lastly we have been employed in barrowing any amount of leaves and rubbish into the new ditch-pit, which really is a great success.

The other day I paid a visit to Kessingland. Here I found that Bayfield, with the aid of a labouring man who has been employed in the ditch-digging and draining, has finished preparing the piece of ground that was occupied by a border, a stunted fence, and a little grup—as we call a small ditch in East Anglia—in which a drain has now been laid to take the water, to be sown next spring as an addition to the Front lawn. Although it seemed flat enough, this breadth took about forty loads of soil to make it level, which luckily were provided by the top spit of the stuff taken from the new ditch. In the result the improvement is, or will be, great, and the scrubby bushes of Privet, &c., from the fence have most of them been replanted upon the cliff face.

The amount of soil that will come out of a small space is really wonderful; thus that excavated in widening and adding to the field ditch in question, and the digging of a soakage hole, amounted to over two hundred and fifty loads, which have been spread about the meadow, or, when it was too clayey to be of service there, dumped into the old marl-pit in its centre. On this Front tennis-lawn the turf has been lifted where it was depressed and relaid after placing soil beneath it, with the result that the ground is now much more level than it has been. At present Bayfield is engaged in digging out the two new beds for Asparagus that are to be set with some of the plants which I raised from seed. Generally speaking, I was glad to find that the garden looked in excellent order, and very tidy for this dead season of the year.

On the beach half the length of the lines of bushes which I have set there, projecting seawards from the outmost rows of Marum, were washed away by the great November tide. The rest of them remain, however, and are already accumulating heaps of sand, as I anticipated that they would. The Marum itself is now of a rusty hue, but that is natural to it at this, its period of rest.

At home we have at length begun digging the new border round the Lawn pond, which hitherto, work as we would, we found no time to touch. Now that we have finished the most pressing jobs in the garden, I hope that we shall make good progress with it, that is, if frost holds off. Our plan is—for I think I said that the ploughing scheme was given up—to lift the top spit, turn and stir it well, and then break the subsoil beneath with a fork, covering this over again with loam dug from a little farther on. By the way, I find that this subsoil where we are digging now was once a roadway, for there by hundreds lie the stones of which it was composed.

What road can ever have run past that pond in the middle of the Front lawn I have no idea. No tradition remains of it, nor is it to be found on any old plan that I have seen. Probably those who made and used it have been dead for hundreds of years, but perhaps it may have had something to do with the ancient manor-house, of which the surviving portions are now cottages by the back gate. At any rate, it will be good drainage for my new border.

Whenever he has found time Mason has been going on with the potting up of the importation of Odontoglossum Crispum, which it is now necessary to be done with, as many of the bulbs are emitting little white roots that, if left to become too long, would break when handled. We are using a mixture of sifted leaf-mould, moss, and peat, and except in the case of the finest pieces, placing two plants in each pot, where they are secured with a sharp-pointed stick. Some of these plants, of course, are dead, but it is wonderful how many of them have plumped up since they were unpacked after their long journey. I think that when all the survivors are dealt with, there will not be very far short of two hundred and twenty potfuls of them.

I am, however, in some distress about these Crispums, as the account for the importation has never come to hand. My fear is that it has been lost in the revolutionary troubles of Panama, and that the kind gentleman who took so much trouble for a stranger, not knowing this, may think my delay in settling somewhat peculiar. However, I can do no more than write and wait.

Now in the dying days of December the Orchid houses, as is their delightful habit, are beginning to look bright. Thus the Cypripedium blooms are many, and, amongst other things, the Lælias Anceps have begun to open their glorious flowers. Also this season, I am glad to say, all the Angræcums Sesquipedale are preparing to come out in quite a satisfactory manner. Even now I am not altogether convinced that I gave the true reason of their failure last winter. It may be owing, not to their potting in the leaf-mould, but to the fact that this operation was carried out too late, namely, in October, when the bloom spikes, though not visible, were in embryo.

In the greenhouses also the Cyclamen are making a nice show, and the Cinerarias have begun to expand their brilliant flowers. Our new treatment of the Eucharis Lilies, and especially the long, cool rest we have given them, seems to have answered well. At any rate, one noble head of snowy bloom is out, and I see a good many others pushing up. I wonder, by the way, if it is true, as I have heard, that all the Eucharis Amazonica which are in cultivation spring from a single imported plant that has never been found again in its native habitat.

So good-bye to 1903. From a gardener's, as from a farmer's point of view, it has been a miserable year, for fruit absolutely the worst on record. Many of the vegetables also have not produced more than half a crop, notably Potatoes. This I know because the amount realised by Mason from the sale of stuff that the household cannot consume is not more than half that which he was paid last year, although a much larger area of land has been under crop. To those market gardeners who live by their produce, this state of affairs must have proved serious indeed.

Yet we have some cause for thankfulness. I see from an excellent map which is published in the *County Gentleman* that at Yarmouth alone in the United Kingdom there was less rainfall in 1903 than in 1902, and at Geldeston, within four miles of Ditchingham, there were only 27 inches, as compared with 38 inches in London. Also we, in the Geldeston district, had 1442 hours of sunshine (less, it is true, by 190 hours than our average), as compared with 1231 hours in the London district. So we have been better off than many other places.

Still if the garden has been unprofitable from causes beyond our control, I have, I confess, found it as delightful as ever to work and wander in, and even to describe. Indeed, if a reader here and there receives as much pleasure from the perusal of this humble, daily record of my horticultural struggles and vicissitudes, as I have from the setting of them down, I shall count myself most fortunate. Also, notwithstanding our disasters born of unseasonable frost and wet, sunless skies, I console myself with the reflection that on the whole we have made good progress. The garden is in better order than it was on the first of January last year, and the addition to the croquet-lawn, however laborious, is without doubt a great and permanent improvement, as will be the new Pond-border—when it is done. The relaying of the old lawn by the house, which I contemplated, with some other enterprises, must, however, await a more convenient season, for I doubt our finding time to deal with these before the Ides of March.[1]

Now in the first days of the new year—may it bring prosperity to all sweet gardens and those who own and tend them—I gather this morning a white Rosebud and a single flower of Anemone that is whiter yet. To me the one is as a ghost from the grave of dead, forgotten Summer, and the other a spirit of the Spring, breathing that eternal promise which was from the ancient days and evermore shall be.

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[1] For various reasons this idea has been abandoned. In place of levelling the old lawn another strip is being added to the east side of the croquet and tennis grounds, which will bring up their total width to nearly eighty yards. Also banks are being made upon either flank of them, on the tops of which will be planted privet hedges to provide privacy and shelter.—H. R. H., Oct. 1904.

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